BOTANICAL

ANTHOLOGY

WINTER VOL 3 | ISSUE 11 | 2024

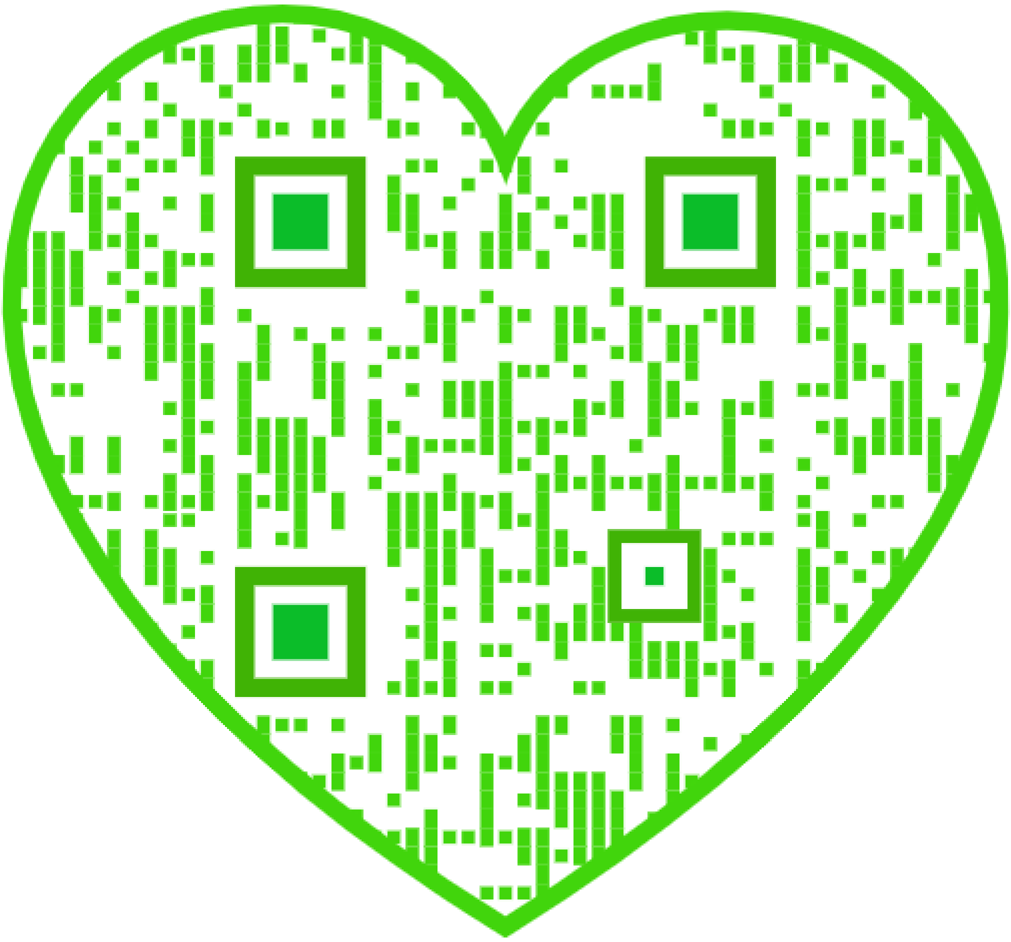
Pine Needle Soda

Grow Yerba Maté

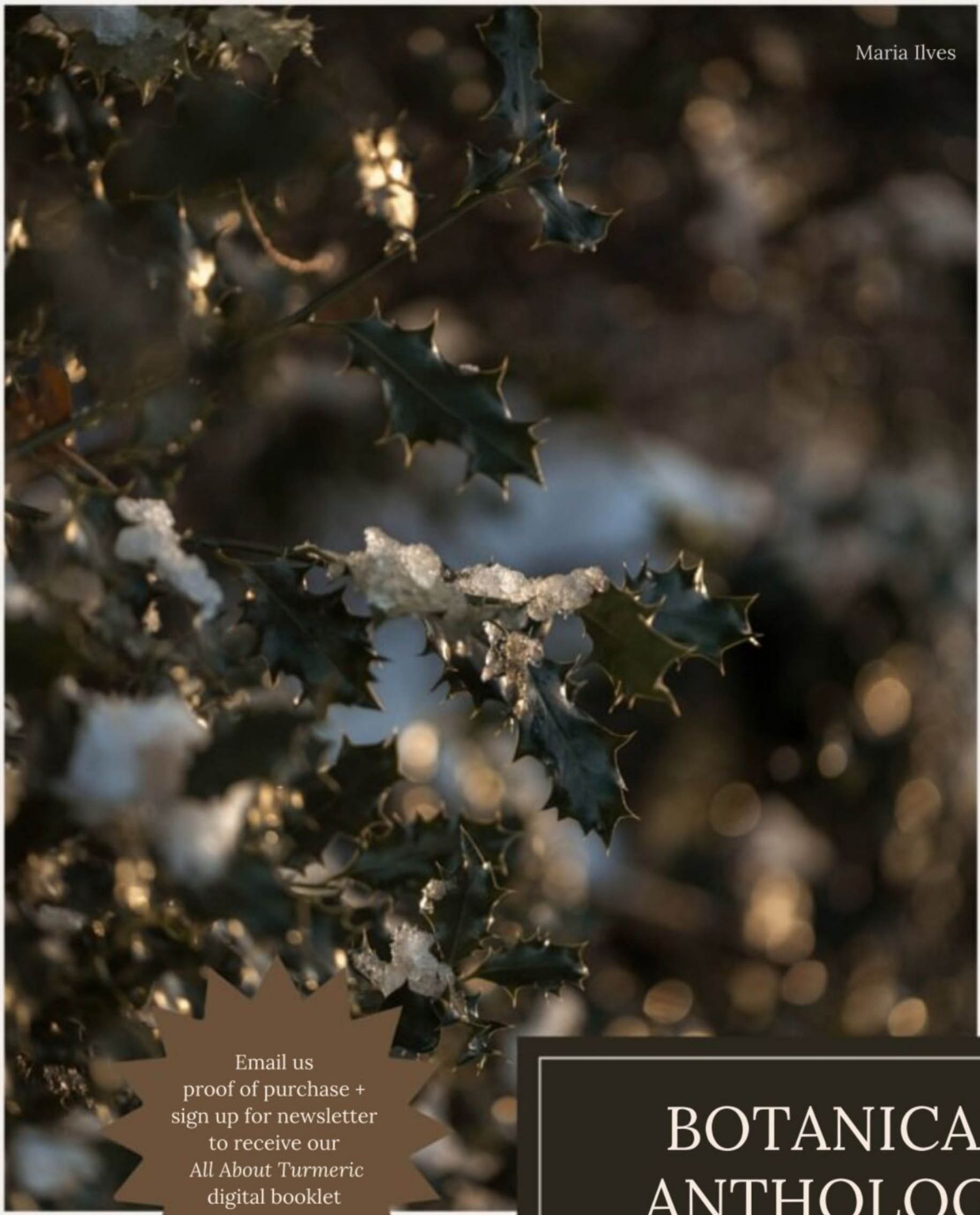
Host a Women's Circle

Oatmeal Lotion

Herbal Vitamin C Powder



WELCOME


Maria Ilves

BOTANICAL ANTHOLOGY

Seasonal
Plant Centered
Digital + Print Magazine

A compilation of work from plant lovers.
Journey with us through the
Winter season,
exploring herbs of and for this time.

A publication put forth by
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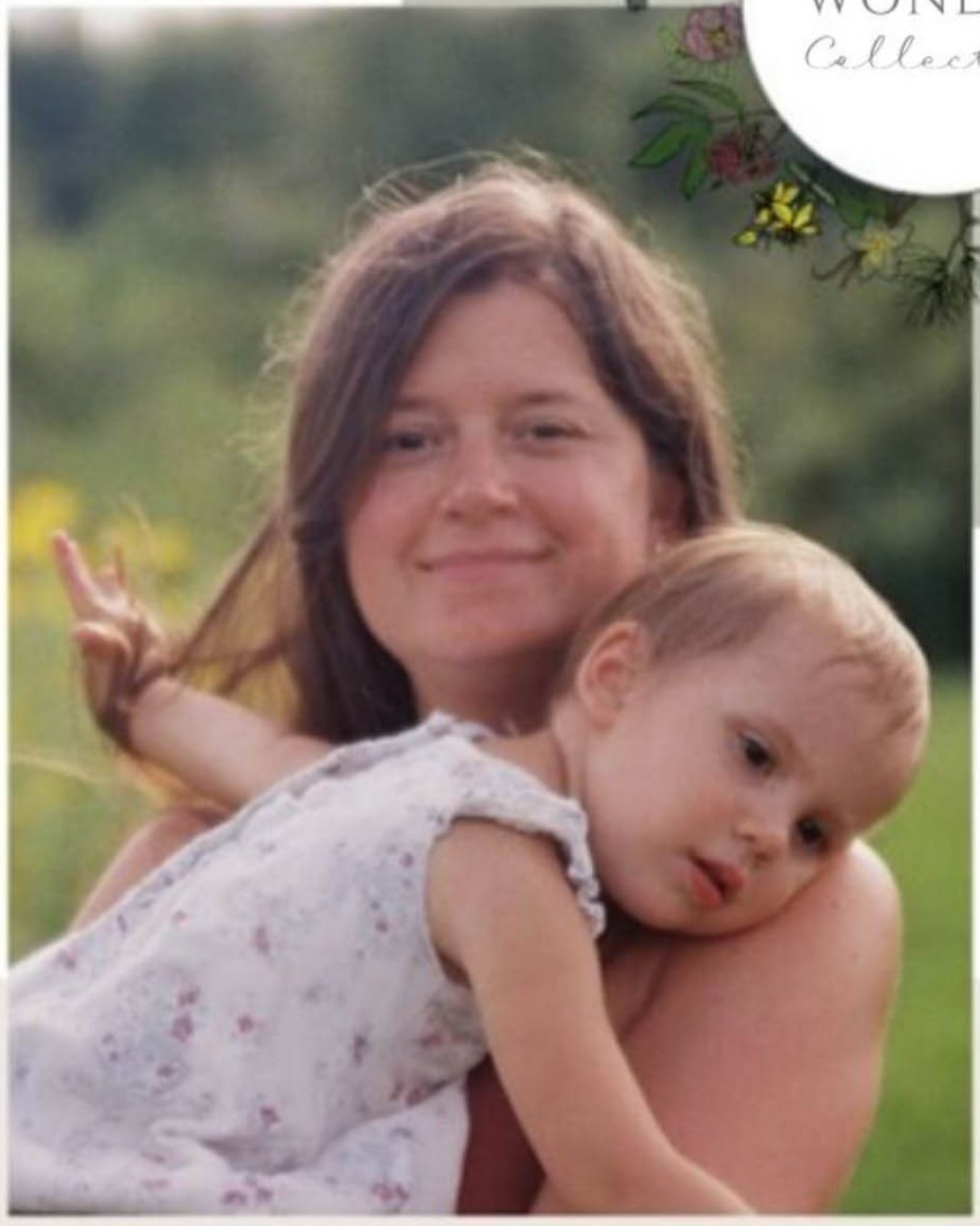

Editor's Note

The cold has settled in. Herbs offer warmth, comfort, guidance and wellness. We must embrace the stillness to reap the bounty of the darkness. The slower days of winter make room for experimentation and playing with the plants brings joy and vigor to the long season.

* Blend **vitamin C powder**, steep **cough elixirs** + whip up **oatmeal lotion**
* Roast **hyssop chicken**, bake **friendship bread** + ferment **pine needle soda**
* Forage **juniper**, care for **houseplants** + consider **windfall herbs**
* Make **gingerbread candle holders**, fashion **rosemary wreaths** + carve **block print stamps**
* Brew **full moon teas**, start a **women's circle** + muse over **poisonous gifts**
* Celebrate the Winter Solstice with **gløgg**, Midwinter with **scrying**, + discover Mother's Night + Hen Galen
* Meet **Connie Byers**, **Kathleen Perillo** + **Rebecca Fils-Aime**

We love to support your journey and bring forth ways the plants can play a role. We hope you enjoy the eleventh installment of Botanical Anthology. It was a joy creating it for you.

A special thanks to **Anna Reisz Editing** and **Green Hound Press** for their copy editing and graphic design work to ensure a professional publication.

We welcome your feedback at plantwondercollective@gmail.com

For questions specific to an article, please directly connect with the author.

Harmonie O'Loughlin
Founder + Editor
@florasfeastbotanicals
@plantwondercollective
@botanical_anthology

DISCLAIMERS + SAFETY

DISCLAIMERS

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The images on the front and back covers come from the article Fermented Pine Needle Soda on page 54 by Colleen Codekas and photography by Stephanie Mary.

SAFETY

When working with plants, there are measures to follow to ensure your safety:

Understand plant properties that might be similar to existing known allergies. Always patch test when using a new skincare ingredient. Never use on broken skin.

When foraging, use at least 3 sources to accurately identify a new plant. When in doubt, do not harvest. Be sure you have permission to forage on the land and it is free from chemical spraying or pet excrement. Take care not to overharvest and only take what you need.

Do not exceed dosage recommendations for essential oils use. Do not ingest or use essential oils directly on your skin. Use caution when using essential oils with babies, children and animals.

We recommend using high quality, food grade and organic ingredients, when possible.

Work with clean, food grade equipment to avoid contamination.

Wash your hands before you begin a project.

Always work in small batches to ensure you use these preservative free recipes before they spoil.

Label your creations. You will forget what’s in the bottle!

Always consult your health care provider when working with new remedies, especially when pregnant, nursing, have specific health conditions, or take pharmaceuticals.

To purchase dried herbs, search for food coops or natural foods stores in your area as many have bulk sections where you can choose the exact quantity you need.

Additionally, you can purchase bulk herbs from a local herb farm or online from Mountain Rose Herbs, Frontier Co-op, Oregon Wild Harvest and Starwest Botanicals.

Maria Ilves

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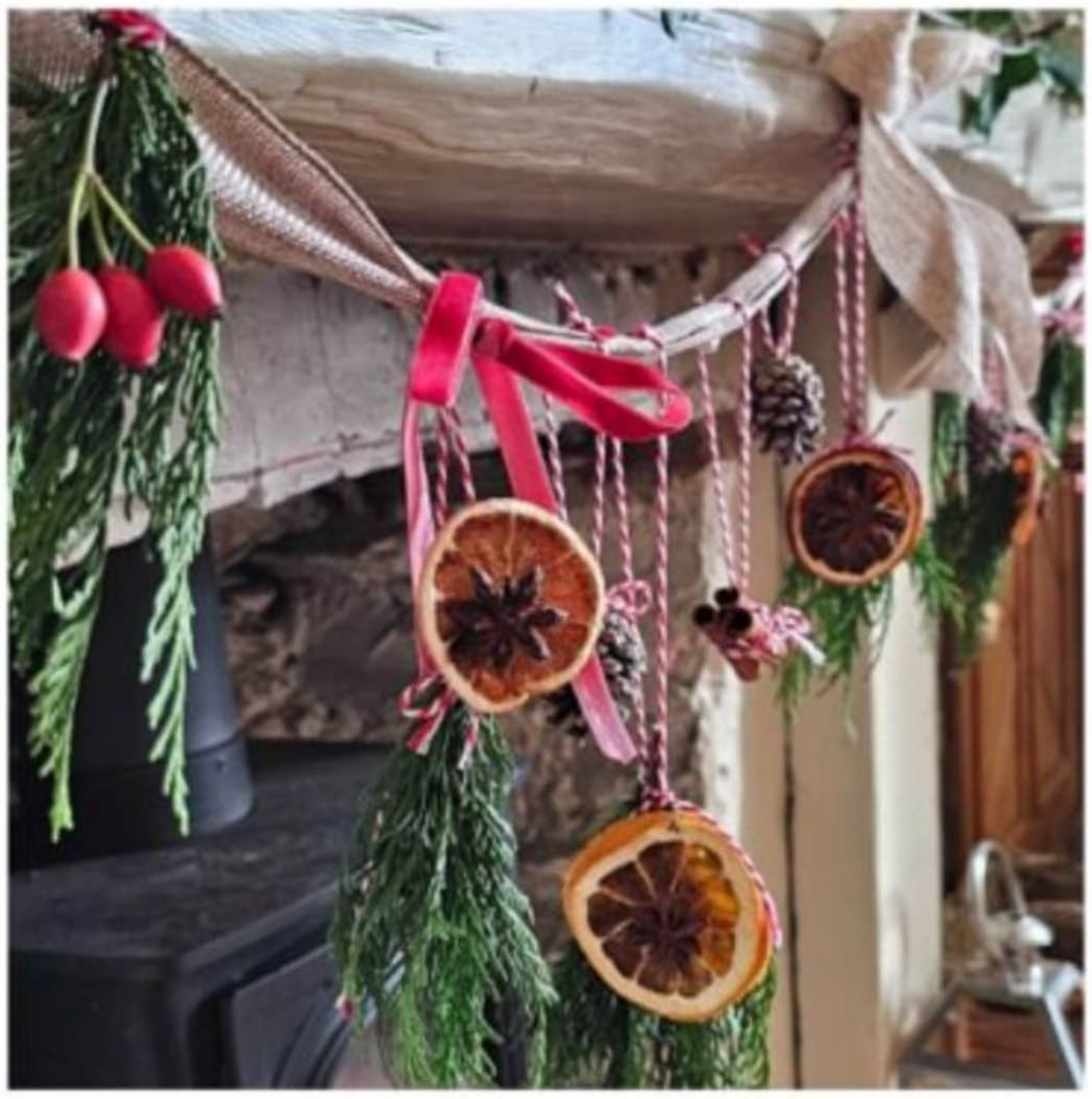


WINTER GARLAND

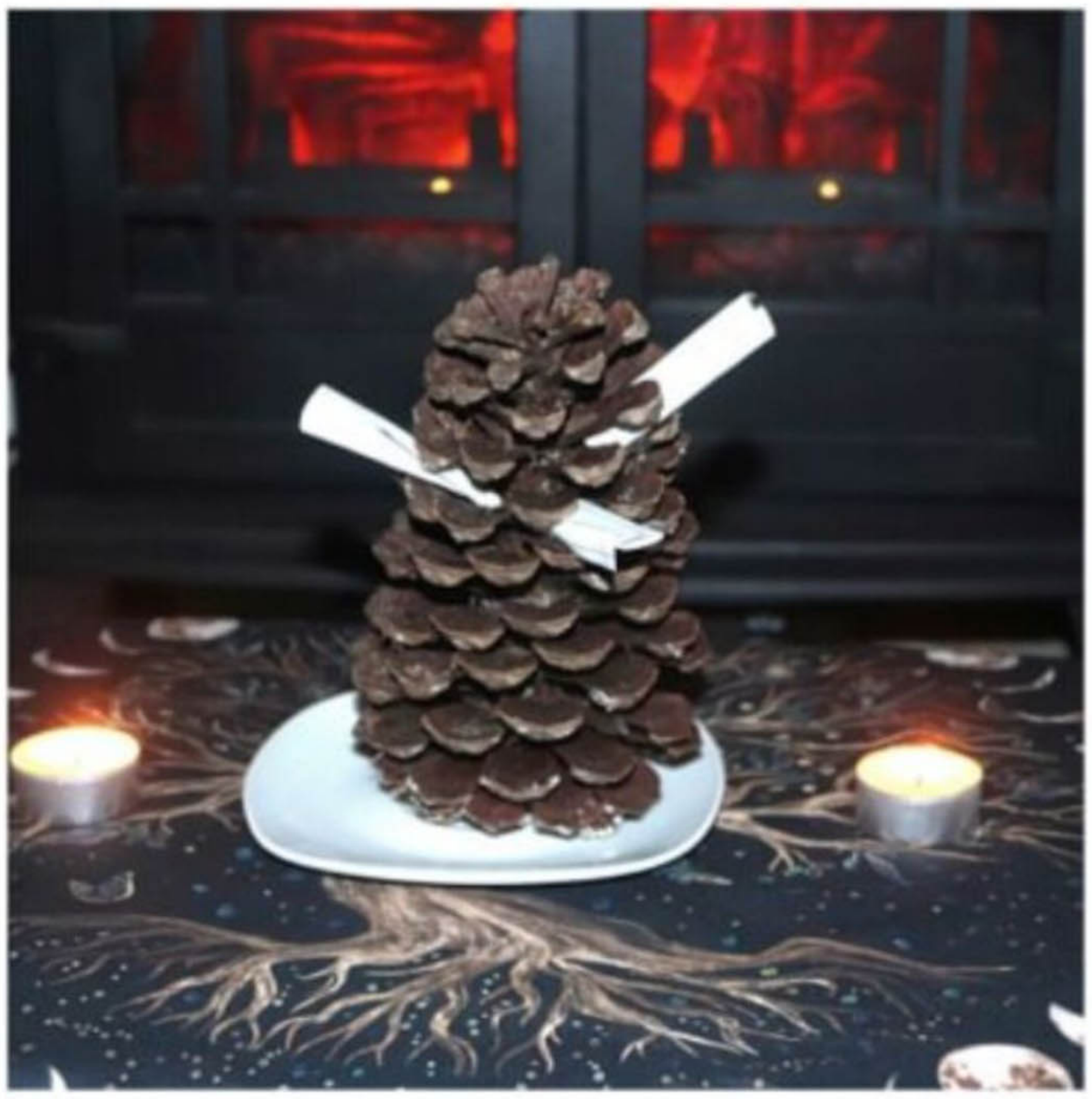
Create a simple garland to hang at a mantlepiece by combining evergreens with foraged berries and rose hips, pinecones, dried oranges decorated with cloves and star anise, and bundles of cinnamon sticks. Cut a piece of burlap ribbon slightly longer than the length of your mantle. String your decorations and hang them along the burlap ribbon with twine or ribbon and finish off with a central burlap bow.

-Lara Watkins

NATURE'S CALL PRIVY SPRITZ

Decadent holiday food and a hectic social calendar can lead to doing a #2 away from the home bowl. Use a spray on top of toilet water before excrement has been deposited to help trap the smell. In a 2-oz spray bottle, mix 2 tsp vodka, 1 tsp dish soap, 10 drops each of lemon and orange and 5 drops each of lavender and rosemary essential oils. Top off the bottle with distilled water. Shake before use.

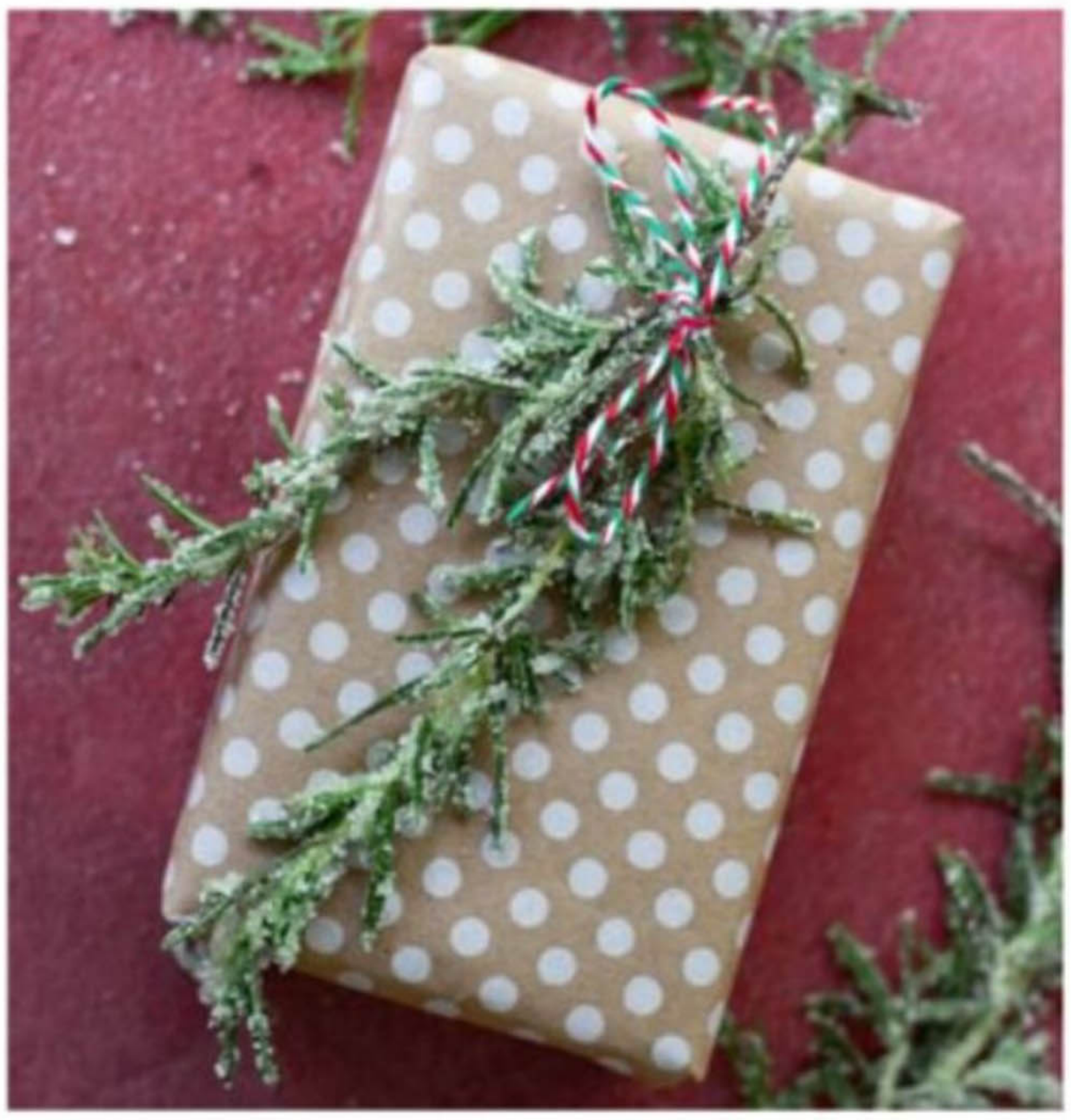
-Harmonie O'Loughlin



PINE CONE WISHES

A simple activity to do with friends and family at Yule is to create pine cone wishes. Write aspirations onto small pieces of paper, roll them into tight scrolls and stick them between the scales of pine cones. Gather around the bonfire on the Winter Solstice and consider the intentions before tossing the pine cones into the fire, sending the wishes into the universe.

-Jennifer Mayfield



FESTIVE SUGARED ROSEMARY

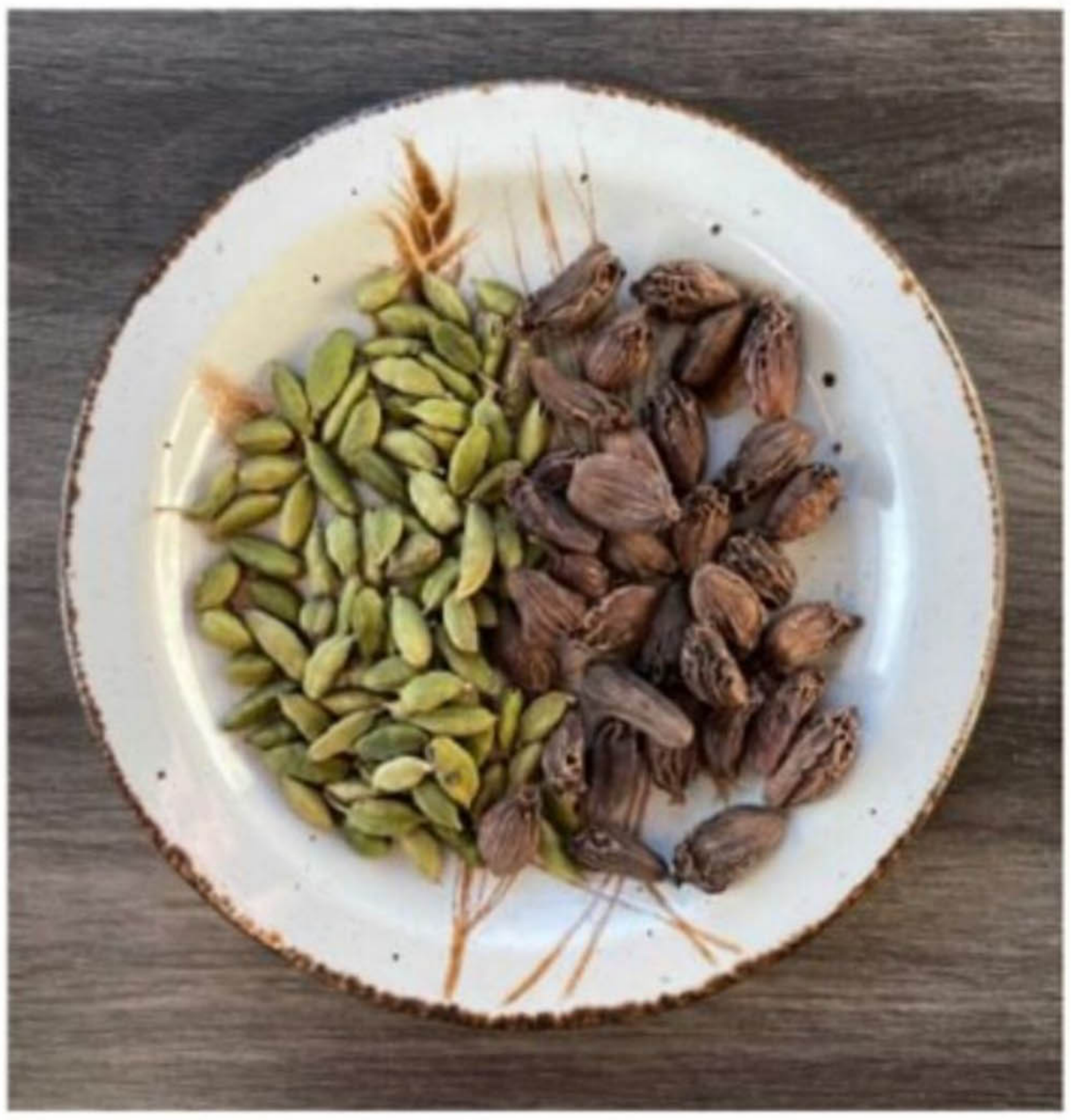
Add sparkle to gifts, charcuterie boards, or cocktails with sugared rosemary. Simmer 1 ½ c sugar and ½ c water until sugar is dissolved. Stir in fresh rosemary to coat. Dry until tacky, then roll in dry sugar for a frosted look. The sweet, fragrant sprigs are a perfect decorative topper, offering a delightful holiday aroma and charm.

-Brittany Gibson

HOLIDAY DIGESTION BITTERS

Craft a batch of orange bitters to support digestion before rich holiday meals. Combine equal parts dried orange peel, cardamom, cinchona bark, and ginger and cover with a high-proof alcohol like vodka. Steep for two weeks, then strain. Combine 1 cup tincture with 1 tbsp rich syrup made from a ratio of 2:1 sugar to water. Take a few drops before meals to promote digestion and ease the holiday indulgence!

-Brittany Gibson



GREEN VS BLACK CARDAMOM

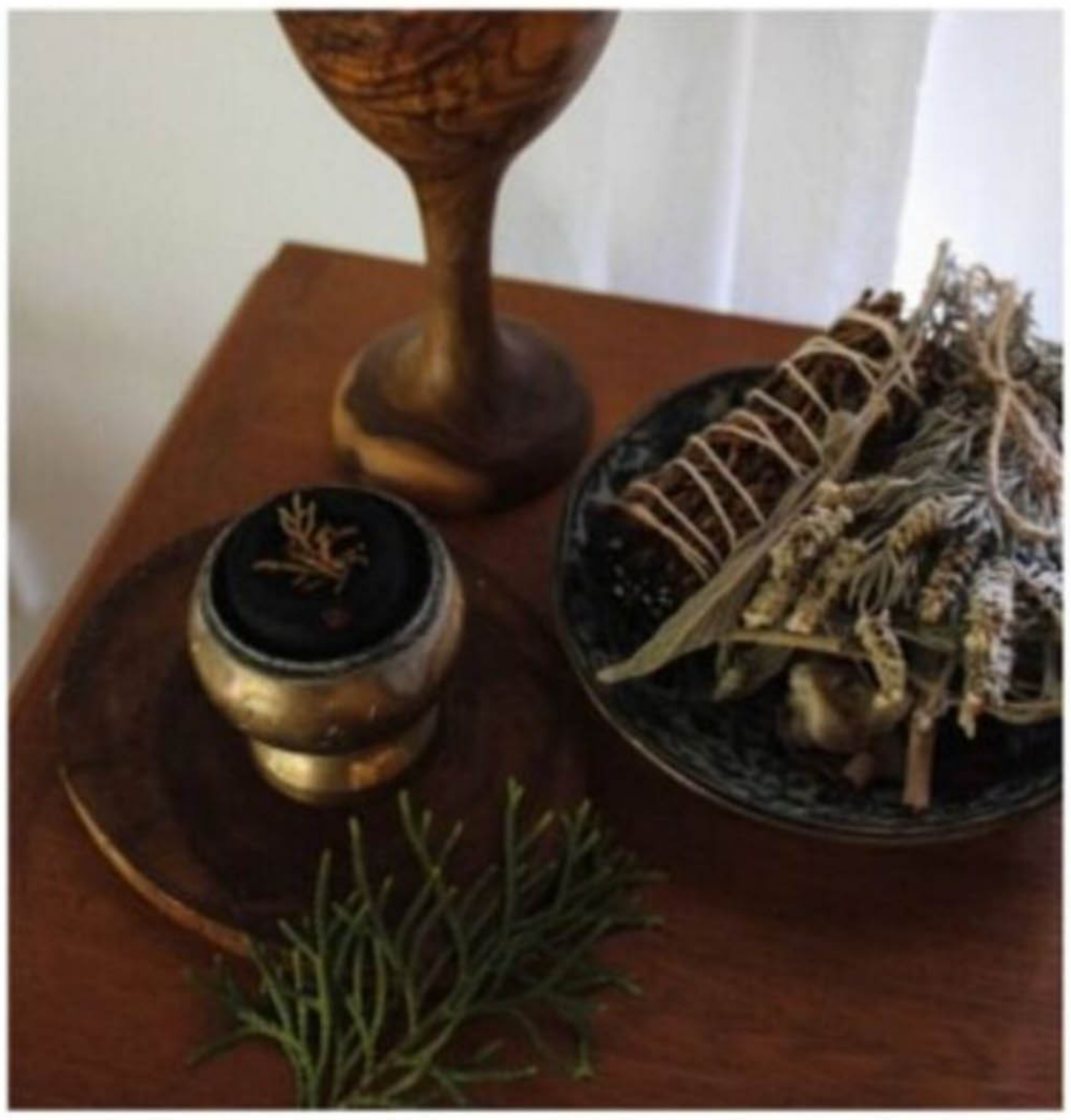
Know the differences between green and black cardamom? Green is picked immature and dried minimally. It's sweeter, lighter, and versatile flavor-wise. Black fully ripens, then is dried for a longer period over a fire. It's dark, smoky, camphorous, and resinous. Medicinally, the two can generally be used interchangeably. Black cardamom can be a bit more warming and especially helpful for digestive issues.

-Anna Reisz

SPICED WINTER SQUASH SEEDS

Perfectly toasted winter squash seeds are a true seasonal treat! Toss 1 cup seeds (rinsed of strings) with 1 ½ tbsp melted butter, 3 tbsp brown sugar, ½ tsp cinnamon and ginger powders, and ¼ tsp salt. Spread on a parchment-lined pan. Bake at 300°F for 40-45 minutes until well glazed and toasted. Store in an airtight container once cooled.

-Andrea Kristin



PURIFYING WHITE CEDAR

Eastern white cedar is a North American plant known for its protective and purifying qualities. To work with it, mindfully harvest leaves and hang them upside down to dry for 3-6 months. Crush a pinch of the leaves, placing them on top of a burning charcoal disc in a dish of salt or sand, allowing the aromatic smoke to cleanse your space and safeguard your home.

-Hannah Forest

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QUILLS

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PRACTICAL HERBAL WISDOM FOR YOUR EVERYDAY QUESTIONS

BY ALEKSANDRA OSTROWSKA-WIWER

DOES ASHWAGANDHA HELP IN DECREASING HIGH LEVELS OF ESTROGEN IN MENOPAUSE?

Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) is an Ayurvedic herb known for its adaptogenic properties, meaning it helps the body manage stress and supports overall well-being. While there is no conclusive evidence that ashwagandha directly lowers estrogen levels, it plays a role in balancing hormones, which can be particularly beneficial during menopause when estrogen levels naturally decline.

During menopause, the ovaries reduce estrogen production, leading to symptoms such as hot flashes, mood swings, and sleep disturbances. Ashwagandha's ability to support the nervous system and enhance resilience to stress can help alleviate some of these symptoms, particularly by improving mental and emotional stability. Its anti-inflammatory and immune-boosting effects also contribute to overall health during this transitional phase.

However, for direct estrogen modulation, other herbs may be more appropriate. For example, black cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*) and red clover (*Trifolium pratense*) contain phytoestrogens, which mimic estrogen in the body and can help alleviate common menopausal symptoms like hot flashes and mood swings by stabilizing estrogen levels. Additionally, diindolylmethane (DIM), a compound found in cruciferous vegetables, supports estrogen metabolism, promoting healthy estrogen levels and reducing the risk of estrogen dominance.

While there is no definitive proof that ashwagandha lowers estrogen directly, it supports hormonal balance, helping manage menopause-related symptoms. For estrogen regulation, herbs with estrogen-like effects, such as black cohosh and red clover, or supplements like DIM, may be more effective. It's always best to consult with a qualified clinical herbalist to determine the most appropriate treatment based on individual hormonal needs.

WHAT HERBS CAN HELP PREMENSTRUAL SYNDROME AND MENSTRUAL CRAMPS?

Premenstrual Tension Syndrome (PMS) refers to a range of symptoms that occur during the luteal phase of the menstrual cycle, typically just before menstruation. These symptoms can include cramps, water retention, mood swings, headaches, nausea, back pain, and breast tenderness, often subsiding once menstruation begins. Although many women experience painful periods, this discomfort should not be normalized. It is important to explore the underlying causes of PMS, which often stem from hormonal imbalances, poor diet, unstable blood sugar, or vitamin and mineral deficiencies.

Phytotherapy offers several herbs that help alleviate PMS and menstrual cramps. Vitex (*Vitex agnus castus*), also known as chaste tree berry, is well-known for balancing hormones by helping increase progesterone levels and reducing excess estrogen, supporting mood swings and breast tenderness. Black cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*) offers anti-inflammatory and antispasmodic properties, useful for menstrual cramps. Cramp bark (*Viburnum opulus*) is another valuable herb, known for its muscle-relaxing effects.

Red raspberry leaf (*Rubus idaeus*) supports reproductive health and helps reduce the intensity of cramps, while dong quai (*Angelica sinensis*) helps balance hormones and improve circulation. Wild yam (*Dioscorea villosa*) mimics progesterone, easing PMS symptoms, and fennel seeds (*Foeniculum vulgare*) provide digestive relief, reducing bloating and cramps. Other herbs, such as kava kava (*Piper methysticum*) for its calming and pain-relieving properties, and yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), which helps regulate blood flow and alleviate pain, also provide support.

Combined with a healthy lifestyle, herbal remedies offer a holistic approach to managing PMS and menstrual discomfort effectively.

The responses in Ask an Herbalist are for educational purposes only and should not be considered medical advice. Always consult your health care practitioner when starting a new herbal regiment. Send your questions to plantwondercollective@gmail.com with the title "Ask an Herbalist."

Aleksandra Ostrowska-Wiwer is a biologist, certified herbalist, and naturopath. Through Herbedies, she offers consultations, herbal blends, and eBooks to support immunity, gut health, and overall wellness. Combining scientific knowledge with natural remedies, Aleksandra shares her passion for herbal medicine on her website and social media at @herbedies, helping others lead healthier, balanced lives.

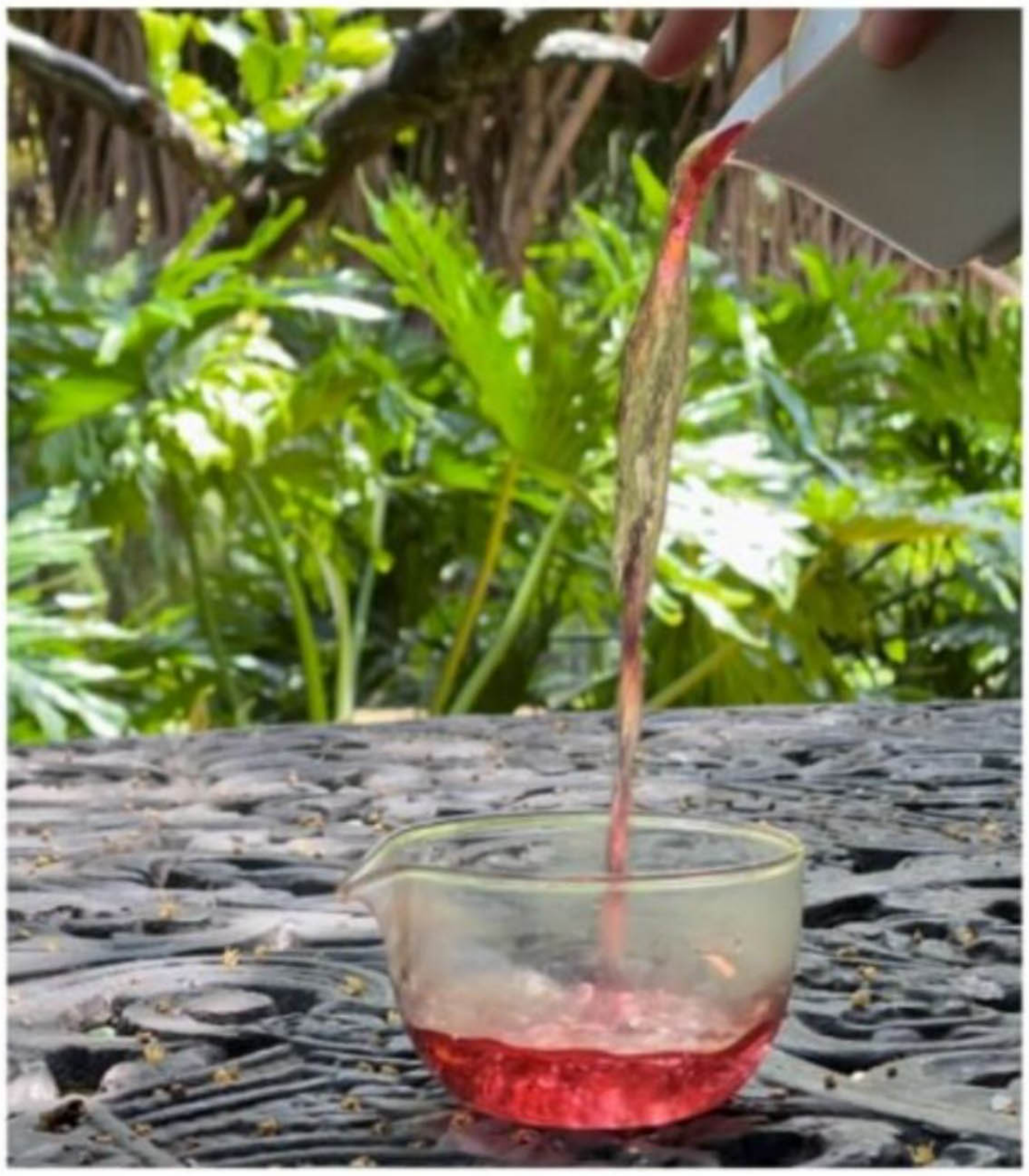
WATER + BLOOD

GENERATIONAL HERBAL WISDOM FOR THE WINTER SEASON

BY DR. LINH LE

The ancient Chinese connected winter as the time of the kidneys and the water element. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), winter is when yin energy is most abundant, influencing us to align more with introspection, restoration, and conservation of inner resources.

Winter is when the kidneys and the water element are most active. It is known that the kidneys hold the keys to vitality, developmental growth, and Jing essence — the foundation of blood, DNA, and bones. The kidney essence also passes down ancestral energy, thus during this time of the year, generational wisdom becomes more accessible as our Qi life force focuses inwards on nourishing the deepest parts of ourselves and conserving vital energy. The kidney energy will be reflected in the state of our health and relations during its related season. If someone has been pushing their limits, the kidney energy may be weakened and could manifest as a cold, flu, a need for rest, or reconnection to one’s spirit.



The kidneys are also related to health of the blood and overall vitality. When kidney energy is imbalanced, the blood that nourishes the body may also be deficient. To be in balance during colder weather, TCM recommends having warming soups and teas, using yin nourishing and immunity boosting herbs, and connecting to one’s inner spirit and generational wisdom for strength and inspiration. Chinese medicine herbs can help support the body’s resources and prepare us for nature's seasonal changes.

Huang Qi, or astragalus, has been used for centuries in ancient China to help strengthen qi and support the immune system during epidemics. It does this by boosting the Wei Qi, or defensive energy, which helps protect against external pathogens. It is added to soups, broths, and teas to prevent illness and support recovery after long-term sickness.

Sheng Jiang, or Ginger, is a widely utilized herb across many cultures. In TCM, its warming nature is used to counter cold energy, support digestion, and promote blood circulation, along with its powerful anti-microbial properties. It is traditionally used as a remedy for cold hands and feet, indigestion, nausea, and body pain due to cold.

Cong Bai, or green onion bulbs, have been traditionally used in soups and broths alongside herbs like ginger, garlic, and star anise to warm the body. In TCM, Cong Bai is known to energetically push pathogens out of the body at the first signs of a cold or the flu. Using the entire green onion is recommended — the tops for garnish and bulbs added to the broth for its medicinal qualities.

Long Yan Rou, or longan fruit, is a common traditional herbal remedy to nourish one's blood and spirits. It is sweet and warming in nature, and helpful during times of low energy, anxiety, stress, and insomnia caused by blood deficiency or overwork. Long Yan Rou is eaten in most Asian cultures, and often advised by elders against eating too much, as it can overstimulate blood circulation, leading to nosebleeds.

Gou Qi Zi, or goji berries, are well-known for their ability to nourish blood, qi, and yin in the body. Long used in TCM, it supports the body when there is fatigue, tired eyes, and low energy, particularly after menstruation or stress. As an herbal ally and powerful antioxidant, it can guide us in times of energy restoration and restoring blood for deep nourishment.

Linh Le is a Doctor of Chinese Medicine, a licensed acupuncturist, herbalist, ancestral somatic guide, and educator of Souleo School. Linh guides her clients towards remembering their body's wisdom and embodying authenticity using Traditional Chinese Medicine, mental wellness, somatics, herbalism, and mind-body spirit practices. Connect with Linh on social media at @drlinhlove and check out Souleo's courses and e-Books at DrLinhLove.com

UNLOCK THE TASTES OF WINTER HERBS

BY MEGHAN RHODES

Do you engage your senses when putting together an herbal remedy for yourself or a loved one?

Taste, specifically, unlocks your knowledge and understanding of working with herbs on multiple levels. This is because certain chemical compounds (constituents) within the herbs have distinct tastes, interacting with the body in specific ways. On a deeper level, taste connects our physical body to our memory, both short-term, as well as from generations before us.

The earliest humans had to keenly observe the world around them, alongside trial and error, to understand how to work with medicinal herbs. The knowledge they acquired has now become innate, a conversation our bodies and the plants know how to have without the involvement of our thinking minds.

Understanding the tastes of herbs means you can familiarize yourself with a new plant faster, remember what you've learned about an herb better and make substitutions more easily and effectively. You also awaken that ancient herbal wisdom that's baked deep into your bones, opening you up to a whole new level of connection with the rest of nature.

There are seven tastes - bitter, salty, sour, sweet, astringent, mucilaginous and pungent/aromatic - all of which have particular activities they trigger in the body. Winter is a perfect time to get to know the tastes that are most supportive during the festive season: pungent/aromatic, astringent and bitter.

PUNGENT + AROMATIC

The star taste of the season, these are the fragrant and flavorsome herbs and spices, often one of the highlights of winter cooking. Rich in volatile oils, they tend to warm the body, get the blood moving and stamp out any unfriendly microbes. This makes them perfect to include in meals for the long nights, as well as to slow-infuse in oils to massage into the skin.

Pungent/Aromatic Winter Herbs Cinnamon, clove, ginger, cardamom

ASTRINGENT

Astringency is more of a tightening, puckering sensation in the mouth than an explicit taste, which has the same effect across the body. Although it is cooling, it is supportive in winter as it works in stages. First, the body contracts and tightens to its effects, feeling drier and stiffer, but this means it's better able to retain moisture and become more flexible in the long-term. Astringency keeps us from getting too lax in the winter, allowing phlegm and heavy foods to accumulate.

Astringent Winter Herbs Elderberry, orange peel, yarrow

Olivia Brabbs

BITTER

Bitterness sets off a cascade of events within the body, starting in the mouth stimulating saliva and working through the digestive tract to the liver where the flow of bile begins. This support is essential when we're focusing on heavier foods that take more oomph to digest. In Ayurveda, it is said the bitter taste returns all tastes to normal, perfect to interrupt the slippery slope of winter indulgence. Many bitters are cooling, so aim for warming bitters, which are also often pungent/aromatic.

Bitter Winter Herbs Elecampane, white horehound, rosemary

Meghan Rhodes is a qualified herbalist and the founder of Rhodes Roots & Remedies School of Herbal Medicine. She teaches a unique sense-based herbalism course in the English countryside, which is rooted in remembering, reclaiming and relearning our knowledge of our bodies, our autonomy and how to work with plant medicine. Connect with her on Instagram @rhodesrootsandremedies or at rhodesrootsandremedies.co.uk

HERBAL
VITAMIN C
POWDER
BY KIMBERLY KLING

Vitamin C is an essential water-soluble vitamin with powerful health-promoting properties. During winter, when fresh fruits and vegetables rich in this nutrient are less accessible, whole-food vitamin C powder can provide vital support for immune function, helping to maintain health throughout the colder months.

Vitamin C supports various vital functions in the body. It acts as an antioxidant, helping to protect cells from oxidative damage caused by free radicals. It also plays a key role in the production of collagen, which is important for maintaining healthy skin, cartilage, and connective tissue. Vitamin C supports the normal functioning of the immune system and aids in the absorption of iron from plant-based sources, which can be beneficial for maintaining adequate iron levels. As a water-soluble vitamin, regular intake of vitamin C through diet or supplements is important, as the body does not store it.

A whole-food vitamin C powder may not have as high a concentration as isolated forms, but it offers additional nutrients that enhance absorption and provide broader support. Rich in antioxidants, plant compounds, and natural cofactors, it offers unique advantages beyond vitamin C alone - just as nature intended!

Together, this blend provides a vibrant mix that supports immune health, digestion, and overall wellness. Using herbal powders in beverages or as a topping for food can boost nutrient intake while adding a pop of color and flavor. Try mixing this powder with coconut water for a refreshing adrenal cocktail. Keeping it within easy reach, like in a spice cabinet or on the table, increases the chances of incorporating it into daily routines.

Here are just some of the many herbs available to us that contain vitamin C:

Orange Peel Packed with antioxidants like hesperidin and polyphenols, orange peel supports heart health, may help lower blood pressure, and promotes smooth, healthy skin; plus, its fiber content aids digestion.

Hibiscus Rich in anthocyanins, hibiscus helps fight oxidative stress, supports cardiovascular health, and may aid in natural detoxification due to its mild diuretic properties.

Rose Hips Offering antioxidants like carotenoids and polyphenols, plus galactolipids, rose hips may support joint comfort and mobility, making them a great choice for winter wellness.

Apple While possessing less vitamin C than the other herbs, freeze-dried apples add natural sweetness and dietary fiber, supporting digestion and a healthy gut. Apples contain antioxidants like quercetin and catechin, which help modulate inflammation.

Materials

¼ c rose hips
¼ c hibiscus
¼ c orange peel
¼ c apples, freeze-dried or well-dehydrated

Method

Combine equal amounts of dried herbs and fruit into your grinder of choice, such as a spice grinder, blender, or mortar and pestle. Grind the dried mix into a fine powder.

Store the powder in a clean, dry jar with a tight-sealing lid.

Notes

- Ensure all ingredients are fully dried to avoid clumping. If the powder is sticky, spread it on a lined cookie sheet and dehydrate further at low temperature, then grind again.

Kimberly Kling is a vitalist clinical herbalist based in southern Arizona, where she homesteads with her family. Through her business, Joyful Roots, Kimberly creates small-batch herbal products and educates others on the beauty and wisdom of herbs. She enjoys building a deeper relationship with the Earth through herbalism, gardening, art, and poetry. Find her at joyfulroots.com and @joyfulroots

COUGH COMPANIONS

HERBAL ELIXIRS

BY RABIA JONES

As we move through the winter season, coughs become a common nuisance and persistent challenge for many. Our herbal allies offer us so much support for the respiratory system, with certain herbs having a special affinity for different kinds of cough.

There are a variety of coughs that can manifest from colds, flus, infections and allergies. A wet cough indicates trapped phlegm or mucus and is productive, meaning some of the phlegm is expelled through the act of coughing. This kind of cough can be shallow with easy mucus production or set deeper in the lungs, with a feeling of trapped mucus that is difficult to move out.

Alternatively, a dry cough has very little or no phlegm and can feel like frequent spasms in the lungs, or an itch that cannot be scratched. A wheezing cough is a deeper, rasping cough that can appear as a persistent dry cough, or a wet cough with stagnant mucus set lower in the lungs. When choosing an herb to work with, it is important to take note of the type of cough.

For working with wet coughs, herbs that are expectorants offer great support. Expectorant herbs pull mucus up and out of the respiratory system. Thyme, elecampane, and wild cherry bark are all powerful expectorants. For shallow, wet coughs, thyme can help move lingering mucus out. For deeper wet coughs, elecampane and wild cherry bark both have expectorant action that works deep in the lungs. These herbs are also anti-spasmodics, which can be helpful to soothe a cough that has become persistent with frequent spasms.

When it comes to herbal support for dry cough, herbs that are demulcents really shine. Demulcent herbs soothe and restore inflamed, irritated and dry tissues. Licorice and marshmallow are two demulcent herbs that also have anti-inflammatory effects. Mullein is a powerful herbal ally for multiple kinds of cough, as it is simultaneously a demulcent and expectorant, anti-inflammatory and antispasmodic. For wheezing coughs, mullein can ease symptoms, whether the cough is wet or dry. Ginger is another antispasmodic herb that has antimicrobial benefits and can lessen wheezing in the lungs.

Elixirs are an easy and delicious way to prepare herbs for respiratory support. An elixir is an herbal extraction in a base of alcohol and honey, making these remedies shelf stable and providing additional soothing and antimicrobial action from the honey. All of these cough-companion herbs can be made into an elixir to keep on hand and enjoy by the teaspoon, on its own or in water or tea, in times of need.

Materials

1 c brandy or alcohol of choice
¼ c honey
½ - ¾ c loose herbs

Method

Choose which herb you'd like to work with. If using wild cherry bark, licorice, marshmallow, elecampane or ginger, measure out ½ c. If using mullein or thyme, measure out ¾ c.

Method continued

Add your herb of choice along with the alcohol and honey to a pint jar. Stir well, put the lid on and shake well. Label and date the jar. Let it sit for 4-6 weeks in a dark, cool space and shake daily.

After it has infused for 4-6 weeks, strain the elixir through cheesecloth and a fine mesh strainer. Pour into dropper bottles through a funnel.

Notes

- This recipe makes about four 1oz dropper bottles or one 4 oz dropper bottle.
- Licorice has contraindications with high blood pressure and blood pressure medications. Please speak with your provider and do your own research to make sure this herb is right for you.
- Mullein and thyme elixirs are two that make great daily tonic.

Rabia is a clinical herbalist, educator and medicine maker in the Philadelphia area. She is the owner of Rabia's Remedies, a clinical practice and line of small-batch, organic herbal medicines. She loves to spend time in the woods and in her kitchen crafting medicine. She offers herbal consultations & workshops both in person and online. You can find her online @rabias.remedies or rabiasremedies.com

ENDOMETRIOSIS TEA

HERBAL ALLIES FOR A COMPLEX CONDITION

BY KATHLYN HOSSACK

Endometriosis is a poorly understood, complex inflammatory condition that affects 10-15% of women in North America. Current theories behind why endometriosis occurs include genetic predispositions, chronic inflammation, digestive dysfunction and bacterial infections. Symptoms are unique to the individual, though common ones include pelvic pain, digestive issues, anxiety, depression, chronic pain and inflammation, sleep issues, pelvic floor dysfunction, fertility problems and symptomatic menstrual cycles both during menstruation and ovulation.

Herbal tea blends can be supportive in working with endometriosis and a number of plants have reputations in aiding the variety of symptoms that can come with it.

Blue vervain is associated with use in tension states, both in body and mind. It is bitter in flavor and energetically cooling, nodding to its known use in easing inflammation. Blue vervain is known to promote states of ease, especially for those who prefer to stay busy or have a disposition toward burnout.

Motherwort has been shown to help regulate inflammatory responses in endometriosis and is well known as a traditional support for a variety of women's health concerns. Uses for motherwort include decreasing pain, serving as an ally for mental and emotional wellbeing, supporting the immune system and overall reproductive health.

Ginger is included for its benefits to circulation, digestion and well documented anti-inflammatory properties. It provides a warming flavor, balancing the bitter and cooling sisters blue vervain and motherwort.

Damiana has been shown to aid pelvic pain conditions and inflammation through its help in healthy circulation through the pelvic region. Damiana is known to be supportive when there is historic trauma within the lower body regions. Damiana offers a floral, slightly astringent flavor to the blend.

For whole-body nutrition, nettle and raspberry leaf come onboard with vitamins and minerals that have been shown to support hormonal well being and inflammation management. Calendula flower joins to aid the lymphatic and digestive systems. Last but not least, tulsi or holy basil is well known for its uses in pain mitigation, immune system modulation, stress and anxiety.

Additional add-ins or substitutions for the core recipe can be brought in on an as-desired basis for a more personalized version or different flavor profiles. Yarrow is commonly known as a blood regulator, pain modulator and energetically is known to be supportive of integrating life's experiences. Chamomile is traditionally popular for pain mitigation, emotional discomfort and digestive ease. Rosemary is amazing for digestive support, pain and body-mind integration. Peppermint or spearmint serve the digestive system well and can ease bloating or the sensations often associated with "endo belly."

The recipe below is designed around a month or so supply of daily use. Utilize this tea as a daily tonic, or at the very least for the week of known symptomatic portions of the menstrual cycle.

Materials

½ tbsp motherwort
½ tbsp blue vervain
3 tbsp damiana
3 tbsp raspberry leaf
3 tbsp nettle
3 tbsp tulsi
1 tbsp ginger
½ tbsp calendula
1 tbsp yarrow leaf and flower, optional
2-3 tbsp chamomile, optional
2 tbsp rosemary, optional
2-3 tbsp peppermint or spearmint, optional

Method

Combine the above and store in an airtight container away from potential sources of moisture, direct sunlight and temperatures outside of a normal room temperature range.

Prepare one tbsp of mixed tea to one cup hot water and let steep for 4-8 minutes. If cool tea is preferred, brew a batch as above and store in your refrigerator for up to 48 hours.

Notes

- Speak to your medical provider if you are experiencing symptoms associated with endometriosis, before adding any form of new supplementation or if you are taking any prescription medications that may interact with herbal remedies.

Kathlyn Hossack is a writer and therapist blending clinical herbalism, somatic therapies and body-mind perspectives into her private practice. Kathlyn provides consultation virtually for clients all over the world, as well as consulting in person in Manitoba, Canada. For questions, emails are welcome to evoke.bodymind@gmail.com

SPICED
ELDERBERRY + SEA BUCKTHORN
OXYMEL

BY KRISTINE DE BLOCK

Apple cider vinegar
Cloves

As we move into the colder months, our focus naturally shifts to supporting the immune system, and there's something timeless about turning to traditional preparations. For centuries, oxymels have been a go-to remedy for harnessing the power of herbs in a simple and effective way. The combination of tangy vinegar and sweet honey creates a beautiful balance, not just extracting herbal properties but making them a little easier to take as well! They offer a flexible, time-honored way to incorporate herbal support into daily life.

Spiced elderberry and sea buckthorn create a beautiful winter tonic, combining immune-supportive berries with warming spices to help keep the body feeling balanced and supported. Elderberries (*Sambucus nigra*) are highly valued for their ability to support the immune system, particularly during times of seasonal change. They are rich in flavonoids, specifically anthocyanins, which give the berries their deep purple color and act as potent antioxidants, helping to neutralize free radicals in the body. Traditionally, elderberries have been used to aid the body's natural defenses, particularly in maintaining respiratory health. Their antiviral properties have made them a popular choice for promoting overall wellbeing during colder months, helping to keep the immune system strong and resilient.

Known for its high vitamin C content, sea buckthorn berry (*Hippophae rhamnoides*) makes an excellent addition to any winter remedy. Its tart flavor complements the sweetness of honey, and it helps support the immune system, offering a nourishing boost. If sea buckthorn berries aren't available, substitute with another berry high in vitamin C and antioxidants. Rosehips are a great alternative because they have a similar tartness and immune-supportive qualities.

These warming spices of cinnamon, clove and ginger have traditionally been used to help promote circulation and warmth in the body, which can be particularly comforting during the colder months. They also bring a beautiful depth of flavor to the oxymel.

A spiced oxymel is a beautiful, versatile remedy that's just as comfortable in a spoonful as it is drizzled over a cozy bowl of oatmeal or stirred into a steaming mug of tea. However you decide to enjoy it, this recipe invites you to embrace the season's slower pace and give your body a little extra care. Get creative with it, share it with loved ones, and let it bring warmth and wellbeing into the heart of your winter days. After all, there's a certain magic in remedies passed down and made with intention.

Materials

1 c elderberries, dried or 2 c fresh
½ c sea buckthorn berries, fresh
1 cinnamon stick
5 cloves
2 in ginger root, fresh, sliced
1 c local honey, or maple syrup
2 c apple cider vinegar

Method

In a sterilized glass jar, combine elderberries, sea buckthorn berries, cinnamon, cloves, and ginger. Pour the apple cider vinegar over the mixture, ensuring all ingredients are fully submerged. Seal the jar and let it infuse in a cool, dark place for four weeks, shaking it every few days.

After four weeks, strain the mixture through a sieve lined with a muslin cloth. Add honey to taste, starting with one cup.

Store the oxymel in a sterilized bottle, keeping it in a cool, dark place.

Notes

- If using metal lids, place a layer of parchment paper between the lid and the jar to prevent corrosion from the acidity of the apple cider vinegar.

Kristine is a UK-based medical herbalist and founder of The Crafty Herbalist Academy. She runs a busy herbal practice in the Chilterns and teaches an accredited herbal immersion course which focuses on the art and science of herbal medicine, practical skills, seasonal living, wildcrafting, and remedy-making. Learn more at craftyherbalistacademy.com or follow her on Instagram @thecraftyherbalist

TURMERIC + WINTER ACONITE

FACIAL MASK

BY CHYNA T. SANDERS LONG

Face masks are skincare treatments designed to deeply nourish, hydrate, detoxify, or brighten the skin, addressing skin at a deeper level than daily skincare routines. Making face masks at home offers convenience and customization based on unique skin needs, plus the benefits of natural ingredients. It allows you to tailor masks with specific botanicals, clays, or extracts to improve texture, tone, and overall skin health in a way that's often more affordable and free from unnecessary additives.

A detoxifying facial mask is part of a holistic approach to skincare, blending ancient botanical wisdom with modern self-care. Turmeric and winter aconite detoxifying facial mask can help boost your glow while promoting a more balanced complexion.

Turmeric, a golden spice used for centuries in Ayurveda as a natural remedy for skin conditions, is well-known for its antibacterial and skin-brightening properties, particularly for acne and discoloration. It works to reduce breakouts and helps brighten and even out skin tone, promoting a radiant, youthful appearance.

Though not as widely known, winter aconite brings powerful detoxifying properties to this mask. It aids with inflammation and skin hydration while working in tandem with turmeric to clear impurities and reduce redness. Particularly beneficial in cold seasons, winter aconite helps dryness and irritation to flush toxins from the skin.

Yogurt is rich in lactic acid to gently exfoliate and soften the skin. Honey is a natural humectant that locks in moisture while balancing skin tone. Lemon juice adds a brightening boost while helping to clarify.

Together, they form a powerful combination to soothe and renew the skin. With ingredients straight from nature, this mask offers a gentle and effective solution to revitalize your skin year-round. So, mix it up and treat yourself to some much-deserved self-care!

Materials

1 tsp turmeric powder
½ tsp dried winter aconite root, finely ground
2 tbsp plain yogurt
1 tsp raw honey
½ tsp lemon juice

Method

In a small bowl, combine the turmeric powder and winter aconite powder. Add in the yogurt and honey, mixing until a smooth paste forms. Finally, stir in the lemon juice.

On clean, dry skin, apply the mask evenly across your face, avoiding the eyes and mouth. The mask should feel cool and soothing as it works its magic. Leave the mask on for 10–15 minutes. You might feel a slight tingling from the turmeric and lemon – that's normal! It's the mask's way of telling you it's working.

Using lukewarm water and gentle circular motions, rinse off the mask thoroughly. Be sure to follow up with a moisturizer to keep your skin hydrated and glowing.

Notes

- Always patch test when using new herbs and ingredients.
- Apply once a week or as desired.

Chyna is the creative mind behind Modest Touch Skin, where she explores beauty, lifestyle, and natural plant based-inspired creations. Passionate about natural ingredients, she blends her love for nature into skincare and kitchen creations. Discover more of her plant-based creations on Instagram and YouTube at @ModestTouchSkin

STAR ANISE + CINNAMON

BROWN SUGAR SCRUB BARS

BY KRISTINE CLAY

Exfoliate and cleanse skin with spiced brown sugar scrub bars. A spin on a classic self care staple, these bars are perfect for giving a little extra love to dull, dry winter skin. The addition of warming spices boosts skin health and adds a pleasant smell that is reminiscent of the holiday season.

Molasses-infused brown sugar contains more vitamins and minerals than refined white sugar, to help nourish skin. Sugar is a humectant, which attracts moisture and locks it in, improving hydration. Its exfoliating effect removes dead skin cells for smoother, brighter skin.

Star anise is cleansing and balancing. Its astringent, anti-inflammatory properties promote toned skin. It is rich in antioxidants, which provide protection from the damaging effects of UV exposure and environmental toxins. Star anise also promotes collagen production, which encourages skin rejuvenation and gives it a radiant glow.

Cinnamon is antimicrobial, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory, aiding to cleanse skin and boost its overall health and appearance. The ground cinnamon in these scrub bars is also a natural exfoliant that helps to slough off dead skin, leaving it smooth and vibrant.

These luxurious bars combine the skin smoothing effects of a sugar scrub with the cleansing properties of soap. To use, break off a section of the bar and gently massage it into wet skin, avoiding sensitive areas. You can run the bar under hot water for just a moment to help soften it, if needed.

Turn your shower or bath into a spa experience. It's quick and easy to whip up a batch as a treat for yourself or for a last minute gift. Use a festive soap mold and a cute jar or tin for an extra special touch.

Materials

8 oz melt and pour soap base
1 c sunflower oil
1 tsp star anise essential oil
1 ½ tbsp cinnamon powder
3 c brown sugar
Double boiler
Thermometer
Silicone soap mold

Method

Cut the soap base into small cubes and add them with the sunflower oil to a double boiler. Stir occasionally until fully melted, or microwave for 30 seconds intervals, stirring in between until fully melted.

Method continued

When the soap base is fully melted, add the essential oil, cinnamon powder, and brown sugar, stirring well to combine. Work quickly to incorporate the remaining ingredients before the soap base cools down and thickens.

Pour the soap base into the molds. Ideally, it should be at 130-140° F when pouring. If the base cools too much and becomes too thick, you can heat it again until it reaches the desired temperature.

Let the soaps fully cool and harden for several hours, then remove them from the molds.

Store the bars in an airtight container.

Kristine is a momma, herbalist, writer, and budding botanist who lives in the Andean mountains. Read her musings about non-toxic skincare, herbal remedies, nourishing foods, and holistic mothering on her blog: mamalibelula.com. Find her on Instagram at @mamalibelula or follow along with her family's off-grid adventures at @sierraycielo

TENDING THE BONES

BY JENNI ELYSE WOOLERY

Frozen toes, achy limbs, and crackly joints are often the wintery reality for so many BIPOC folks in diaspora. Being oceans away from their ancestral lands leaves many with a heavy heart and wandering mind. Today, all it takes is booking a flight. Some say, "we just need to get away," to bask in the warmth of an ancestral sun ray. Let's allow that dream and image to become a pleasurable privilege.

There is, however, a real need to be here now, present, and making peace with the barren trees and frosted-over garden canopies. As crystalline as a sacred snowflake, it is clear that escaping the cold reality of winter isn't always viable to those living in diaspora. The best medicine is to embrace the winter forest.

For diasporan BIPOC folks there is a call to honor all parts and seasons in the wheel of life, bearing witness to the *Northern Gates* and welcoming winter, a time of introspective rest. Beneath the blanket of snow there is warmth. So long as the spirit continues to dance, stretch, greet the sun daily, sip warm teas, stoke a fire, eat warm soups, indulge in satiating spices, and take long bath soaks there will always be warmth.

Many traditions associate wintertime with the elders and sometimes elemental depictions of the rigid Earth or purifying Waters. In the stillness and silence of the dark wintery nights, we are invited to honor the enlightenment of the ancient ones, and to do so we must respect the Earth and her time of rest.

Beneath the soil our ancestors' bones decomposed for new life to grow. To revere them and the wisdom keepers who are here now, we must make peace with the shadows while tending to our own bones that will carry us through this life and into the next. Witnessing decomposition, as it is most present during the winter months, is a reverential prayer of venerating our ancestors' bones.

Tending to the bones requires that BIPOC folks implement strengthening and fortifying practices while leaning upon herbs that support mobility, warmth, and restoration. Sesame, cinnamon, astragalus, and cedar are four wintery herbs that can support those in diaspora.

Sesame (*Sesamum Indicum*) is an annual ally Indigenous to the African continent and grown throughout the tropical regions of Africa and Asia. The original caretakers of this plant utilize the roots, leaves, and seeds for its magnesium, calcium, omega-3 and omega-6 medicinal benefits. Sesame is an antiarthritic tonifying plant that can help address joint pain, arthritis, bone pain, stiffness, numbness, and kidney pain.

Cinnamon (*Cinnamomum verum*) originates from Asia and is grown in South China and Sri Lanka. The tree bark yields a sweet and pungent spice known for its warming and bone strengthening qualities. Ceylon cinnamon increases circulation throughout the body, helps alleviate pain within the joints, and assists in easing cramps and overall bodily discomfort.

Astragalus (*Astragalus membranaceus*) also mirrors a doctrine of signature which associates white colored herbs as having an affinity for bone health and being effective anti-inflammatories. Astragalus is an excellent ally to combat the cold, helps to address chronic bone pain, and can alleviate arthritic conditions. This sweet and warming root originates from Mongolia and is an adaptogen, helping the body to cope with the rigid stressors of winter.

Cedar (*Cedrus deodara pine*) has always had its place as an Afro Indigenous folk remedy utilized to soothe aching bones and joints. Cedarwood has calming, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, and aromatic properties. Cedrene is a terpene found in cedar which is responsible for some of the pain-relieving benefits found in the North African native evergreen.

With regular hot soaks, warming foods, fires, exercise, time in the sun, and wintery herbal allies, those in diaspora can make winter a ritualistic, sacred, rejuvenating, and healing experience.

Materials

4 tbsp astragalus root
1 tbsp cinnamon powder or bark
4 tbsp cedarwood leaves or bark
8 tbsp sesame seeds
1 c magnesium flakes
4 drops cedarwood essential oil, optional
4 tbsp himalayan salt, optional
2 tbsp bentonite clay, optional

Methods

Brew 4 to 6 cups of astragalus, cinnamon, and cedarwood for 20 to 40 minutes, strain and let cool.

Pour brewed tea over top of sesame seeds in a blender. Blend at high speed.

Strain and then pour liquid over top of magnesium flakes. Once magnesium flakes have dissolved add essential oils and optional ingredients. Stir and pour the mixture into a lukewarm to hot bath and soak for 45 minutes to an hour.

Named after her great grandmother Jenni Woolery, the daughter of enslaved sharecropper Adolphis, Jenni has made it her life mission to reclaim ancestral land stewardship and folk medicine. A farmer, certified herbalist, Indigenous activist, writer, yogini, and an initiated Olorisha, Ifarike Okun Salewa is the founder of the Indigi Golden Herbal Folk Academy 501©3 whose main purpose is to uplift the voices of Indigenous medicine folk. Stay in touch by visiting indigigoldenherbalacademy.org or follow her Instagram @indigigoldenherbalsmedicine

OATMEAL LOTION

BY BRITTANY GIBSON

Homemade oatmeal lotion is the perfect solution for dry or irritated skin in the winter months. By crafting your own lotion, you have full control over what goes into it, ensuring your skin receives gentle, nourishing care without harsh chemicals. This simple DIY recipe is not only cost-effective, but addresses dryness, itchiness, and irritation with the added benefits of your favorite seasonal herbs.

Oatmeal is known for calming inflamed and itchy skin. It creates a protective barrier that locks in moisture and soothes conditions such as eczema or dry patches. Combined with shea butter's deep moisturizing properties and coconut oil's renewing benefits, a homemade lotion becomes a powerful tool for winter skin challenges. Adding vitamin E oil helps extend the lotion's shelf life while boosting skin elasticity and offering antioxidant protection.

Evergreens add anti-fungal and acne-fighting benefits and clove contains antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties that can help fight acne and signs of aging. Using essential oils like lavender or peppermint can add a cooling and calming effect.

Oatmeal lotion is the perfect winter companion and gentle enough for daily use, especially on sensitive areas like hands, elbows, and knees.

Materials

¼ c shea butter
½ c coconut oil
1 tbsp whole cloves
¼ c cedar tips, dried
¼ c finely ground oats or colloidal oatmeal
½ tsp vitamin E oil
5 drops essential oils, optional

Method

Using a double boiler, gently heat the coconut oil over medium heat and add cloves and cedar tips. Steep the oil with the herbs for about 3 hours. Remove the bowl from the heat and strain the oil.

In a clean, dry bowl, add shea butter with the still-warm infused coconut oil, using the heat to melt the shea butter. Stir until smooth.

Stir in the finely-ground oats and vitamin E oil, mixing well to ensure all ingredients are fully incorporated. Add essential oils, if using, and mix well.

If desired, strain the liquid through a fine mesh strainer or cheesecloth to avoid oat chunks in the final product. Allow the mixture to cool and harden at room temperature.

Use a hand mixer or stick blender to whip the ingredients into a creamy, smooth consistency.

Transfer the lotion to a clean, airtight jar, preferably glass, and store it in a cool, dry place. Label your jar with the preparation date to track its freshness.

Notes

- Cedar can be substituted with pine, spruce, or fir.

Brittany is a mama of 2, aspiring herbalist, and city dweller seeking to help others live a homestead life in a modern way. Find more about her work at thehomesteadchallenge.com, The Homestead Challenge Podcast, or @brittanylgibson on Instagram.

WINTER
SALVE
BY WHITNEY BANGEL

With winter comes cooler temperatures and drier air, which often lead to chapped skin. A simple solution is an all-purpose salve featuring plantain, yarrow, and dock leaves, three medicinal plants that pack a punch in knocking away dry and itchy winter-time skin woes.

Plantain (*Plantago major* and *Plantago minor*), commonly thought of as a weed, has long been used to soothe skin irritations due to its anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties. Herbalists have often relied on it for minor burns, insect bites, and cuts. Plantain's mucilage content helps to lock in moisture, making it a key ingredient for combating the dryness that winter weather brings to our skin. Its soothing qualities make it an essential for any winter salve designed to hydrate skin.

Used historically as a wound healer, yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) is prized for its ability to help stop bleeding and reduce inflammation. Its astringent properties can tighten the skin, making it effective for treating winter-related chapping and cracking. Beyond its ability to reduce irritation, yarrow’s antimicrobial traits protect the skin from infections, giving it a dual function.

The leaves of curly dock (*Rumex crispus*), while often overshadowed by the roots, bring their own properties to the mix. Traditionally, dock leaves were applied to burns, rashes, bruises, and insect bites due to their cool, soothing properties. The astringency in the leaves tighten and calm irritated skin, making it ideal for helping eczema or dry, cracked skin. Roots can replace leaves in this recipe.

Together plantain, yarrow, and dock create a winter salve that hydrates, protects, and soothes, offering natural support to have on hand all season long.

Materials

1 c yarrow, leaves + flowers, dried
1 c curly dock leaves, dried
1 c plantain leaves, dried
2 oz beeswax

Method

Begin by infusing your oil with your plant material. You can slow-infuse over the course of 6-8 weeks, or you can do it in a matter of days, if time is of the essence. To slow infuse, chop your plant material and place it in a glass jar, covering fully with oil. Place the lid on and store in a cool, dry, dark place for 6-8 weeks, shaking once a day. To fast-infuse, pour your oil into a pan and then place your sliced plant materials in with it. Bring to a medium heat, then turn off and let cool. Repeat this process a few times, then put a lid on and leave to set overnight. The next day, do the same, and repeat this process for a couple days. Strain before use for both infusion styles.

When your oil is ready, bring it to a medium heat while it is in a double boiler. If you do not have one, put a steaming rack inside a saucepan and set a wax pouring can on that. Fill the saucepan with water and the wax pouring can. Then, add your beeswax and keep on the heat until it is fully melted into the oil. While the wax is melting, open your jars and set the lids to the side. After it is melted, begin slowly pouring the oil and wax mixture into your jars, leaving enough space for the lids to go on without causing it to overflow. Once all the jars are full, gently add the lids on and leave them to sit in the same place for 30 minutes to 1 hour, depending on the size of your jars. The mixture will cool from the edge of the jar inward, causing it to slope in at the center. If you have leftover salve mix you can reheat it and then pour a little more into this center part.

Notes

- If you want a softer salve, use less beeswax. Conversely, adding more will result in a sturdier salve.
- If you do not have access to one of the plants, double up on another, still totaling 3 cups of herbs.

Whitney, a homeschooling mom of two boys, lives in Virginia. She has a deep love and appreciation for nature and handicrafts. She also enjoys exploring the outdoors and is frequently found camping, hiking, or leading a weekly nature school. Hands-on activities and nature study are a part of daily life for her and her kids. Follow along with them on Instagram @hollowandhoot

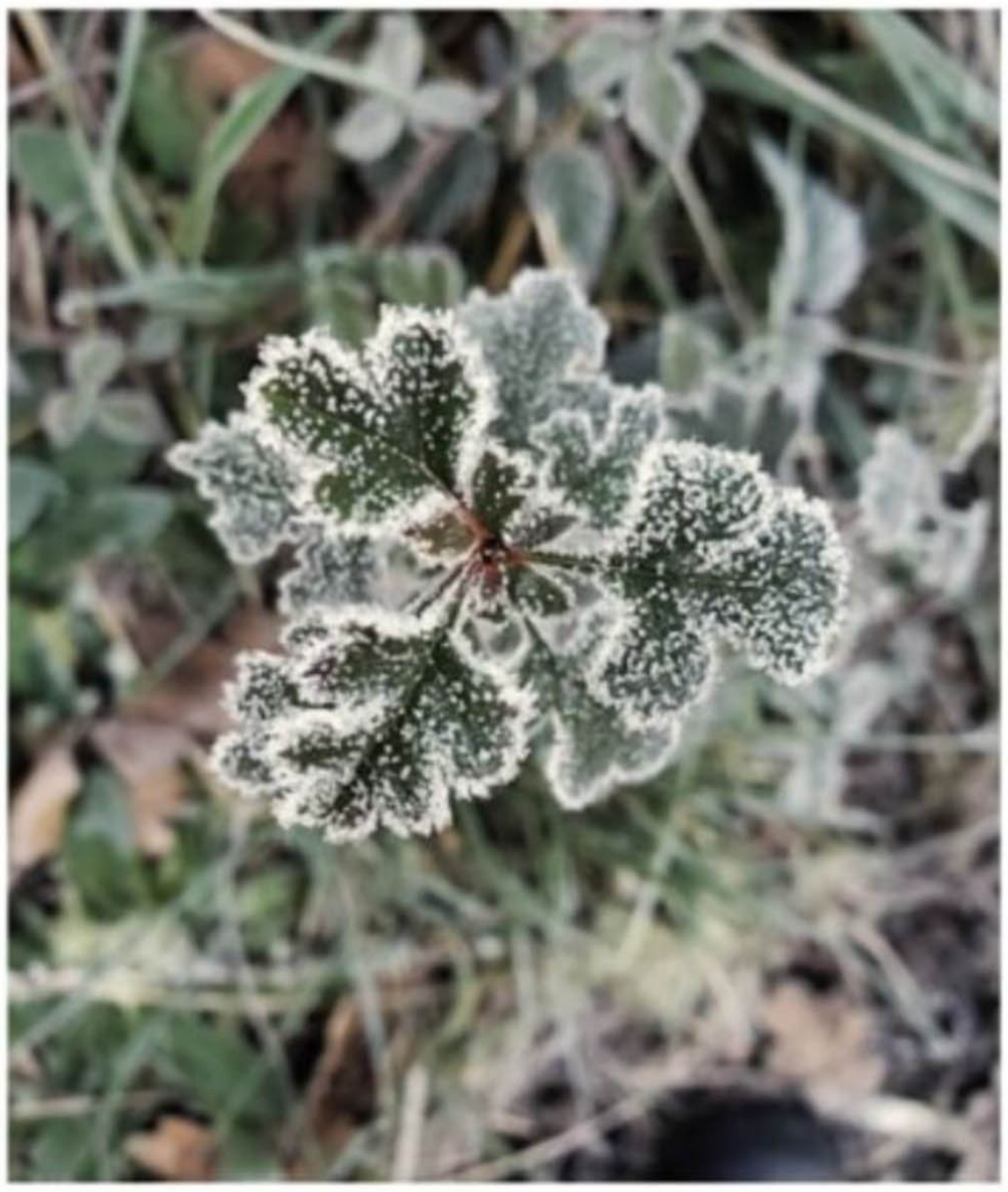
WINTER PLANT CONNECTION

Quality time spent with plants, whether indoors or outdoors, can significantly enhance well-being. While winter may not seem like the ideal season, there are still many opportunities to nurture plant connection during the cold and dark months.

- ***Read about Plants*** Cozy up with a warm herbal beverage and delve into plant-focused books, from cozy mysteries to romance to non-fiction. Use the slower months to take time to get to that To-Be-Read pile.
- ***Get Creative*** Winter often provides extra time for crafts and creativity. Consider setting up an herbal simmer pot, baking with herbs, making herbal preparations, or exploring creative plant inspired crafts like embroidery, drawing, or painting.
- ***Embrace the Outdoors*** Bundle up and take advantage of dry winter days to venture outside. As you explore, observe how frost transforms plants—highlighting their unique shapes and textures. Look closely at tree bark, evergreens, and lichens to discover what the season offers for winter windfall foraging. These hidden gems can connect us with the natural world, even in the chill of winter.

By intentionally taking time to connect with plants, even in the heart of winter, it's possible to cultivate a deeper appreciation for the beauty of the natural world, fostering a sense of warmth and delight.

-Erin Harwood



HOMEMADE HERBAL GIFTS

Show loved ones you care with personalized botanical creations that are easy and affordable gifts.

It can be something as easy as putting some loose chamomile in a jar for chamomile tea or jars of spices for a choose-your-own-adventure chai kit. For something more in-depth, formulate a universal skin salve with calendula and plantain or muscle tension liniment with peppermint tincture and comfrey oil

Bath salts, sugar scrubs, or shower bombs are always a fan favorite. Choose scents of eucalyptus and cedar, peppermint or cinnamon to help with cold and flu season or lavender and chamomile to promote relaxation.

Infused honey is always a nice treat for any tea lover. Consider rose, tulsi, or ginger and pair it with a tea infuser and cozy mug. Or bottle assorted aromatic spices for a make-your-own chai kit.

For the foodie, herbal salts will spice up their life. Try blending garlic with culinary herbs such as rosemary, oregano, sage or thyme. Steeping dried mint in vodka will create a mint extract perfect for baking.

The jars can be dressed up with dried flowers and twine or homemade leaf confetti. Give the gift of herbal goodness straight from your hands and heart.

-Jennifer Mayfield

WINTER APOTHECARY

Winter's chill is often associated with increased cases of colds and flu. Fortunately, nature has provided us with plant partners to combat the ick.

- ***Anti-inflammatory*** Herbs to combat the inflammation that often comes with illness. Consider turmeric, oregano, and rosemary.
- ***Immunomodulators*** Herbs that boost or support the immune system. Turn to osha root, echinacea, and juniper.
- ***Demulcents*** Herbs that moisturize and relieve irritation of the mucous membranes. Look for mullein, marshmallow root, and licorice.
- ***Expectorants*** Herbs that loosen mucus and create productive coughs. Consider elecampane, ginger, and thyme.
- ***Febrifuge*** Herbs that help reduce fevers. Turn to elderberry, pine, and white willow bark.
- ***Respiratory Supporters*** Herbs known to support respiratory function. Consider mullein, lomatium, and lungwort.
- ***Warming Herbs*** Herbs that increase circulation and warm the body. Look to cinnamon, turmeric and cloves.

Use any of these herbs alone or in combination as a tea, syrup, elixir, or tincture. Take smaller doses throughout the season to help prevent illness. Take larger doses during active infections to help reduce the duration of illness.

-Connie Byers

AYURVEDIC ROUTINES

As winter settles in, Ayurveda encourages slowing down to rest and reflect, as the season's cold and dryness can aggravate Vata dosha, leading to restlessness, anxiety, and dryness. To counter this, it's important to incorporate grounding and warming rituals into your morning and evening routines that nurture both body and mind.

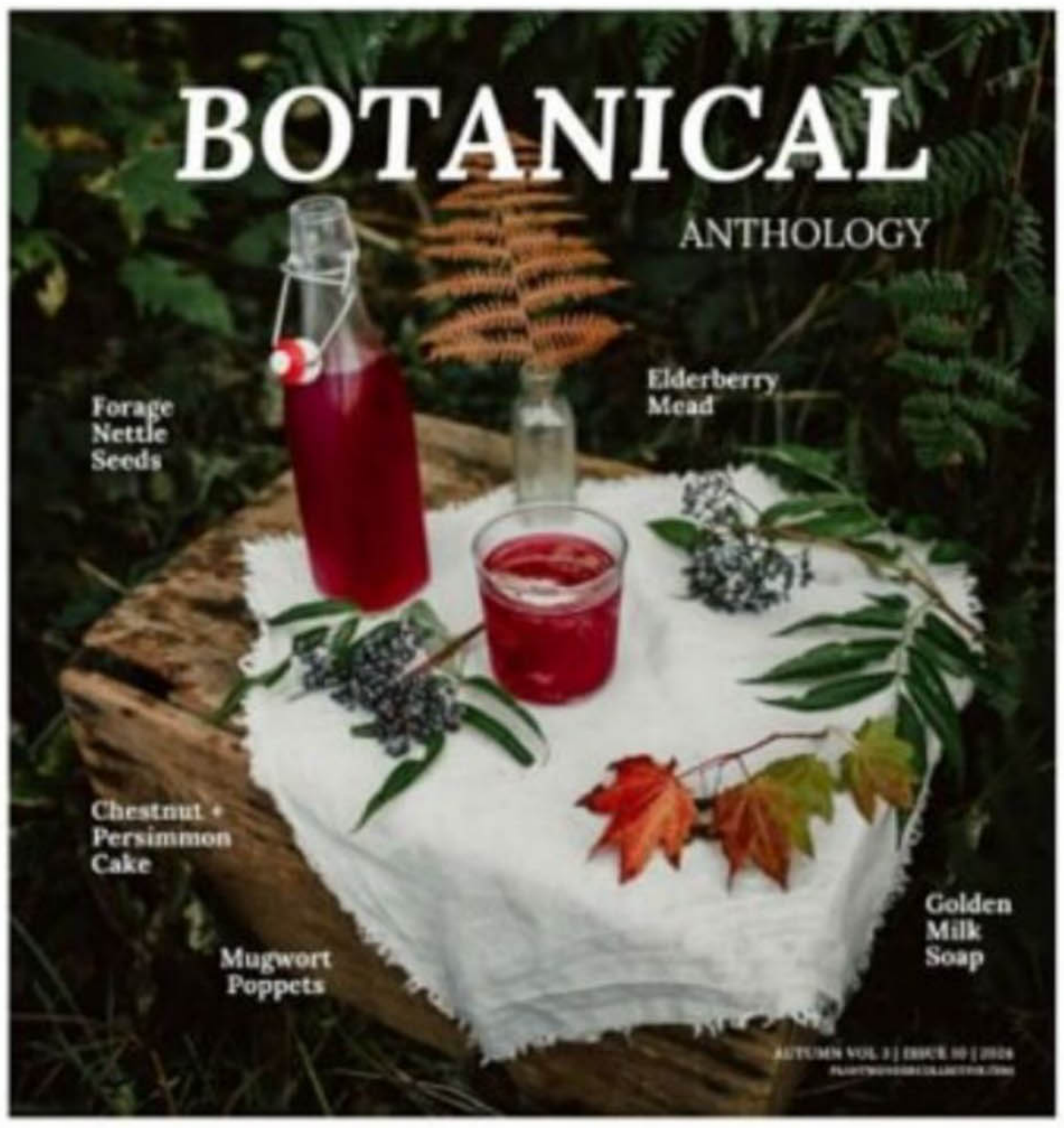
Awaken early, ideally before sunrise. Start with a gentle bathroom routine, oil pulling, hydration, warm oil massage, and light exercise. Embrace meditation and nourishing breakfast.

Indulge yourself in these relaxing evening practices. A warming herbal bath with chamomile or lavender, followed by a soothing sesame oil massage, will nourish and hydrate the skin while calming the senses. Herbs taken, like brahmi and ashwagandha, can help restore the nervous system, promoting deep relaxation and physical rejuvenation. Tulsi, a sacred adaptogenic herb, supports emotional resilience, spiritual awareness, and overall vitality, making it a key herb for winter wellness.

Prioritize sleep hygiene by dimming lights, turning off electronics, and sipping a comforting golden milk with turmeric before bed. These rituals encourage deep rest, allowing the nervous system to rejuvenate and maintain balance through the long winter months, bringing in a sense of overall well-being.

-Leslie Lovlin

Plant Wonder Collective


BOTANICAL
ANTHOLOGY
Forage Nettle Seeds
Elderberry Mead
Chestnut + Persimmon Cake
Mugwort Poppets
Golden Milk Soap

BOTANICAL ANTHOLOGY

DIGITAL + PRINT MAGAZINE

Botanical Anthology is the seasonal, plant-centered *digital and print* magazine of Plant Wonder Collective.

Each edition is a collaboration of over 40 contributors, helping you bring herbs into your apothecary, kitchen, garden, crafts, rituals and seasonal celebrations.

It is a full-page magazine, with few ads and the word count of a small novel, finding the midpoint between inspirational and accessible wisdom for the budding herbalist, natural health enthusiast, (urban) homesteader, and nature lover.

We have produced 11 editions since the Summer 2022.

Digital

Print

Study Circle
PINE
PINE RECIPE
PINE JOURNAL
PLANT PROFILE: Pine
PATREON.COM/PLANTWONDERCOLLECTIVE

STUDY CIRCLE

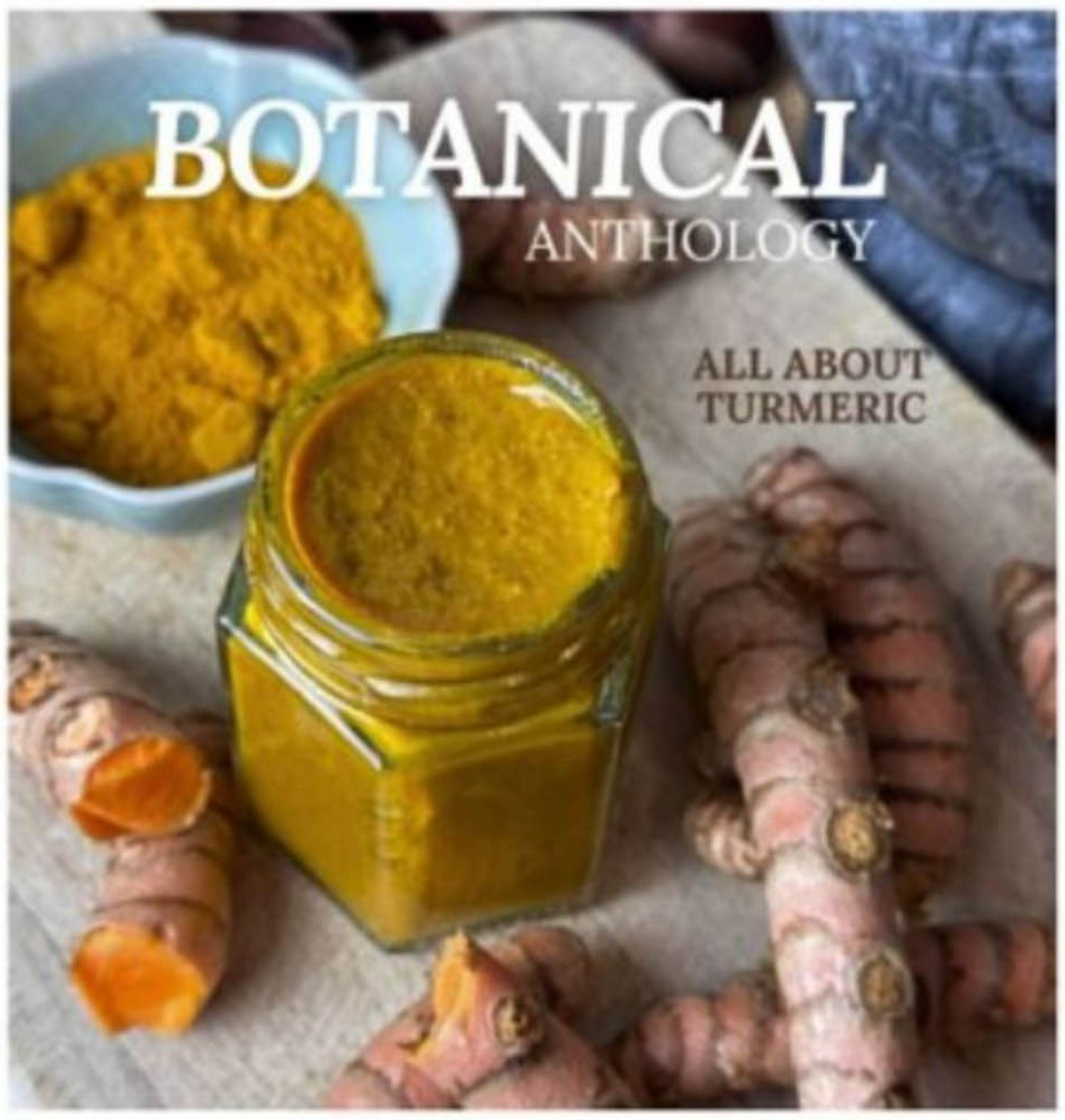
HERB OF THE MONTH PATREON

Study Circle is an organized way to dive deeper into herbalism, one plant at a time. Slow herbalism at its finest!

At the end of each month, you've created another chapter in your very own herbal book!

Each plant of the month content includes:
* Articles, recipes and prompts
* Downloads such as plant profile, journal pages, flashcards, jar labels
* Plant tarot reading and oracle cards by Audrey Gilbert
* Plant tea ritual and recipe by Anna Reisz

Check out our tiers to see if Plant Dabbler, Home Student or Medicine Maker is best for you!


BOTANICAL
ANTHOLOGY
ALL ABOUT TURMERIC

ALL ABOUT

DIGITAL BOOKLETS

Take a closer look at beloved plants through plant profiles, folklore, gardening and a series of recipes perfect for your apothecary, kitchen and craft table.

* Blackberry
* Cinnamon
* Evergreen
* Nettle
* Lavender
* Garlic
* Ginger
* Dandelion
*Rose
*Elderberry
*Turmeric

Digital

Print

Kitchen

Food + Drink

Lara Watkins

HILDEGARD OF BINGEN’S

HYSSOP CHICKEN

BY LEAH JORGENSEN JEAN

Saint Hildegard of Bingen was a 12th-century Benedictine abbess, visionary, mystic and polymath, known for her works as an herbalist, writer, composer, scientist, philosopher, and scholar. She was renowned not only for her spiritual and medical writings, but also for her contributions to herbal remedies, medicine making, and cooking. Her teachings emphasized the healing properties of herbs and food and the importance of incorporating them into our daily lives. Monastic medicine of Hildegard’s time is regaining influence today as naturopathy with the efficacies of natural remedies in preventative and palliative health becoming more recognized in modern medicine.

There is also a renewed interest in Hildegard’s herbalism work through the admiration and study of her extensive herbal gardens at Eibingen Abbey that she founded in 1165 near Rüdesheim in Hesse, Germany. Today, “Hildegardens” refer to gardens inspired by Hildegard’s extensive knowledge of medicinal plants. They often include a wide variety of herbs that she used, such as fennel, hyssop, lavender, sage, thyme, alongside edible plants. The gardens are often intended as contemplative spaces that encourage spiritual reflection, aligning with her idea of *viriditas*, the greening power of life.

Hildegard of Bingen's Hyssop Chicken is one of her most famous recipes that combines the healing properties of hyssop with the deliciousness of roasted chicken. Hildegard regarded hyssop as an important herb in cooking for its support in digestion, helping to clear phlegm, and promote overall respiratory health. Hildegard also valued chicken for its nourishing and easily digestible qualities, particularly for people recovering from illness. In her holistic view, combining hyssop with chicken provided both the nourishment of a gentle protein and the cleansing properties of the herb, thus contributing to both physical strength and spiritual vitality.

Hildegard also liked to cook with wine in combination with herbs like hyssop because she believed wine enhanced the medicinal effects, extracting and amplifying the herbs' properties.

This recipe has been modified to include rosemary, thyme and bay leaf, inspired by Hildegard of Bingen's teachings.

Serve with the pan juices, alongside simple sides such as roasted vegetables or bread, reflecting the simplicity of medieval meals.

Enjoy a medieval aliment with a modern twist, ideal for the winter months when airborne illnesses peak.

Materials

1 whole chicken (organic, free-range, if possible)
2 tbsp hyssop, dried or ¼ c, fresh, finely chopped
2-3 garlic cloves, minced
1 onion, finely chopped
2 tbsp olive oil, butter or lard
Salt, to taste
Pepper, to taste
2-3 sprigs rosemary, fresh
2-3 sprigs thyme, fresh
1 bay leaf
1 c white wine
Water, as needed

Method

Preheat your oven to 350°F. Rinse the chicken and pat it dry with paper towels. Rub the chicken with olive oil, then season with salt and pepper both inside and outside.

Ina small bowl, mix the minced garlic, chopped onion, dried hyssop, and sprigs of rosemary and thyme. Rub the mixture over the outside skin and stuff the remainder inside the chicken cavity.

Place the chicken in a roasting pan and add the bay leaf on top. Pour the white wine around the chicken, adding a little water if needed to ensure there’s enough liquid to keep the chicken moist during cooking.

Roast the chicken for 1 to 1 ½ hours, basting occasionally with the juices in the pan. Add more white wine or water if necessary to prevent the pan from drying out. The chicken is ready when the internal temperature reaches 165°F.

Let the chicken rest for 10 minutes before carving.

Leah Jorgensen Jean is a professional winemaker, holistic nutritionist, herbalist, and regenerative plant medicine grower and forager based in Newberg, Oregon. Visit her on Instagram @cosmicculturebotanicals

GROUNDING KITCHARI

BY KALEE MUND

Kitchari is a simple porridge-like dish typically prepared with split yellow mung beans, long-grain white or basmati rice, and a mix of traditional Indian spices. It is often referred to as Indian “comfort food.” Unlike the typical Western interpretation of comfort food, it offers an array of nourishing and purifying benefits. Kitchari is a strong source of nutrients for people needing easily-digestible proteins including infants, postpartum mothers, the elderly, and those undergoing illness or health recovery. It is particularly valued during cleansing practices and deep spiritual journeys.

During the winter months the metabolism tends to slow down, making it important to consume easily-digestible, warming and nutritious foods. White rice is selected for kitchari because the milling process removes the husk, making it gentler on the digestive system. While brown rice is more nutrient-dense, its fibrous husk can make it harder to digest. In Ayurveda, these beans are classified as “vata balancing,” meaning they do not produce intestinal gas, a common issue with other legumes. Like the rice, the husk of split yellow mung beans is removed during processing.

Together, rice and split mung beans are a complete protein source. Proteins are composed of 20 amino acids; half of these the body can synthesize independently, while the remainder are classified as essential amino acids requiring dietary intake. Animal proteins are inherently "complete," containing all essential amino acids. In contrast, plant proteins must be combined. For instance, grains like rice are typically low in lysine. Legumes, like mung beans, are rich in lysine but lack other amino acids. Thus, the combination found in kitchari provides all ten essential amino acids.

Adequate protein intake is vital in stabilizing blood sugar and promoting fat metabolism. With 95% of the body’s serotonin produced in the gut, it is evident that our emotional health is closely linked to digestive well-being. Chronic stress can irritate the intestinal wall, impair digestion, and hinder detoxification. Kitchari allows the digestive system to rest while providing necessary nutrients to help heal and nourish the body.

Spices are essential in kitchari, each contributing unique health benefits. Black pepper, known as the king of spices, stimulates digestive enzymes and supports gastrointestinal health. Coriander seeds provide cooling effects, aiding in reducing inflammation and enhancing digestion. Fennel, with its sweet and nutty flavor, calms the digestive system, helps relieve colic in babies, and can alleviate menstrual cramps. Fenugreek promotes digestion and breast milk production and is commonly used in dishes like dals and pickles. Ginger root is valued for addressing various ailments from digestive issues to respiratory problems. Brown mustard seeds offer a pungent taste and are recognized for their digestive benefits, relieving stomach cramps and gas. Lastly, turmeric contains curcumin, known for its anti-inflammatory properties, supporting liver detoxification and boosting immunity.

The spices in kitchari are powerful while still being gentle in promoting digestion. Once ground, they are cooked in ghee prior to using in a dish. Many of the compounds in these spices do not dissolve fully in water, so cooking in an oil first, before adding to the water, ensures you get both the fat- and water-soluble molecules.

Kitchari can be eaten as the main food source for a week to offer the digestion a rest, or enjoy it weekly as a nourishing meal. Steamed vegetables can be added to create a balanced meal.

Materials

1 c split yellow mung beans
¼ – ½ c long grain white or basmati rice
½ tsp fenugreek seeds
2 bay leaves
2 tbsp ghee
1 tbsp ginger root, fresh, minced
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp black mustard seeds
½ tsp fennel seeds
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp turmeric powder
½ tsp coriander powder
7-10 c water
½ tsp salt
Cilantro leaves, fresh, chopped
Limes
Pinch of asafoetida, optional

Method

Rinse split yellow mung beans and rice together until water runs crystal clear and put into a soup pot. Add water, fenugreek and bay leaves and bring to a boil. Turn heat to low, cover the pot and continue to simmer.

In a small cast iron pan add 2 tbsp of ghee, letting the ghee get hot before adding the chopped ginger and garlic. Sauté for about a minute. Grind black mustard, fennel and cumin seeds and add to the ghee along with the turmeric and coriander powders. Sauté briefly.

Add the spice roasted ghee to the mung beans and rice. Cook until mung beans and rice become soft, about 30-40 minutes.

Top with a little ghee, cilantro, sprinkle of black lava salt and lime.

Blending Western and Eastern herbal traditions, Kalee has been practicing Ayurveda for over a decade with an emphasis on women's health, birth and postpartum care. Kalee dedicates her time to her family, tending to their gardens and growing herbs. Creating products with ancient wisdom imbued in each one, and finding local analogues for the more exotic medicines. Follow along her journey @rasabotanicals. See some of her creations at rasaholistic.ca

SEAWEED

WILD FOOD FOR WINTER

BY BRIGHID DOHERTY

Eating wild food connects us to this wild world. It physically connects us with the environment it was harvested from and our ancestral ways of eating. Wild foods provide a full range of complex nutrients in their natural states, making them easy for our body to recognize and assimilate. One type that is always available, even in the grocery stores or as a winter forage, is seaweed. Not only is it packed with nutrition and health promoting properties, it is easy to add to meals.

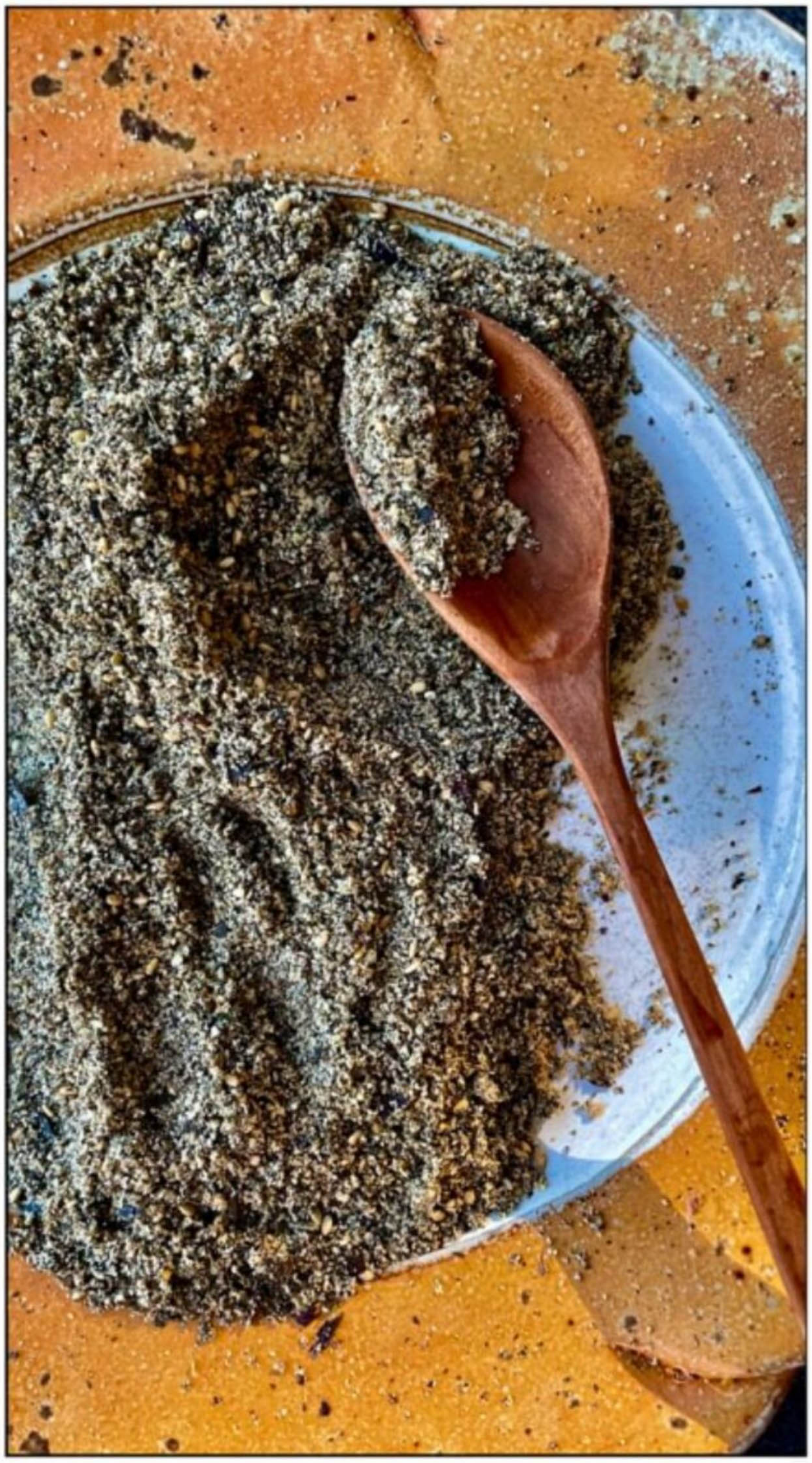
There are two groups of edible seaweed: red and brown. Red seaweed includes dulse, nori, and Irish moss. They have less fiber than brown, but they are easier to cook and digest and are higher in protein. Brown seaweed includes kelp, wakame, and kombu, which can be cooked and added to food. Bladderwrack is also in this group, but it is brewed as a strong tea.

Seaweed has a very high nutrient content that is absorbed directly from the sea. They contain vitamins A, C, B-complex, D, E, and K and a whole range of minerals including calcium, iron, magnesium, potassium, zinc and iodine. Other health-promoting constituents include fiber, fucoidan mucilage, polysaccharides, algin (brown seaweed), melatonin, and lignans. Fucoidan inhibits viruses and fights against antibiotic resistant bacteria. Algin is known as a heavy metal detoxifier that is indigestible, but binds with metals in the small intestine and carries them out of the body.

Seaweed can aid in supporting healthy blood vessels, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels. It provides nutrients necessary to produce hormones, support thyroid function and build energy levels. It assists in modulating symptoms of PMS and menopause. Seaweed also nourishes and soothes the mucous membranes of the respiratory, urinary and digestive systems. It makes skin glow and hair shine. It can reduce inflammation and pain in joints, helping to keep them lubricated and flexible, and helps improve the strength and flexibility of muscles and bones.

Seaweeds are eaten in small quantities over time to gain their benefits. Eating large amounts of it can be hard to digest. Seaweed can be incorporated into the diet in a variety of ways. It can be added to bone broth, vegetable stock, bean cooking water, salads, and stir fries. It is made into chips, sushi wraps, and seasonings.

Furikake Seaweed Seasoning



Furikake seasoning is a Japanese seasoning that was designed at the turn of the 20th century as a calcium-rich flavor enhancer for rice. *Furikake* means "sprinkle over" in Japanese.

Furikake's basic recipe combines toasted sesame seeds and nori flakes. Many other tasty ingredients can be added such as bonito flakes, dried vegetables, spices, sugar and herbs. A blend of seaweeds can be used in this recipe with the addition of kombu, wakame, and dulse. Herb options include basil, thyme, oregano, and rosemary.

Furikake traditionally is sprinkled on rice, but can also be used to season salads, roasted vegetables, popcorn, meat, stir fries, or noodle dishes.

Materials

1 c nori sheets, dried, cut into pieces
1 c unhulled sesame seeds
1 tsp sea salt
1 tbsp kitchen herbs
1 tsp garlic powder, optional

Method

Lightly toast the unhulled sesame seeds and nori in a cast iron pan on low heat. Stir until lightly toasted.

Blend all ingredients in a coffee grinder. Store in a jar on your table or with other regularly used spices.

Notes

- It is important that the seaweed is harvested from a clean water source.

Brighid is a mother, gardener, herbalist, educator, podcaster, and author living on a bridged island in Maine. She is founder of The Solidago Herb School, The Healthy Herb Podcast, and author of Drinkable Healing Herbal Infusions. Connect with her @solidagoherbschool on Instagram and Facebook and solidagoherbschool.com

CINNAMON
SPICED
PICKLED BEETS
BY ANDREA KRISTIN

Cinnamon is a fragrant spice that brings warmth and coziness to the heart during the cold winter months. Its subtle sweetness and just a hint of spiciness remind many of baking and holiday treats, creating a sense of warmth and nostalgia. When combined with the vibrancy of ruby-red garden beets bathed in a sweet vinegar brine, you will discover a pantry treat bursting with color, flavor, and a hint of spice.

Pulling earthy beets from the soil and gently cooking them before immersing them in a brine enriched with botanicals to last throughout the winter season is a nurturing experience in itself. Rich in folate, fiber, and antioxidants, beets are known to support heart health and reduce inflammation.

Derived from the inner bark of Cinnamomum trees native to tropical regions, cinnamon has been cherished for centuries for its medicinal properties and culinary versatility. It is high in antioxidants, helping to lower inflammation and balance blood sugar. It nourishes the body inside and out with its warming flavor and aromatic scent. The infusion of this spice adds a layer of complexity that elevates the humble beet into a culinary delight that is both sweet and tangy, with a hint of spice.

Cinnamon’s warm notes mingle with mustard seeds and bay leaves, which contribute subtle herbal undertones that enhance the beets’ natural flavors. Ginger is recognized for its digestive and immune-boosting properties and brings a fresh, zesty bite that balances the sweetness of the cinnamon. Together, these spices make this pickling project as nourishing as it is delicious.

Pickling spiced beets is a journey into preservation and an exploration of flavor. The process, though traditional, brings modern comfort, preserving the best of the garden with a twist of holiday warmth. Eating them gathered around the dinner table with loved ones or slipping a dripping bite from the jar for a beloved snack brings the abundance of the season to heart.

Materials

2 lbs whole beets
1 ½ c vinegar
1 c water
¾ c sugar
1 tsp kosher salt
1 tsp mustard seeds
Pinch red pepper flakes
½ tsp ginger powder or small knob fresh ginger, grated
½ tsp cinnamon
¼ tsp allspice
1 bay leaf

Method

Wash beets and trim the tops, leaving 1-2 inches. Place beets in a large pot, cover with water, and simmer for 30-40 minutes until tender when pierced with a fork. Remove them from the water and set aside to cool.

In a saucepan, combine vinegar, sugar, water, and spices. Bring to a boil, then cover and simmer for 10 minutes. In the meantime, slice off the tops and roots and peel off the skins of the beets. Rinse and cut into desired-size pieces. Pack the pieces into jars.

Pour the hot vinegar mixture into the jars, leaving a ½ inch headspace. Wipe the rims, then seal with lids and rings. Process jars in a boiling water bath for 30 minutes, starting the timer when the water returns to a boil. Allow jars to cool for 24 hours. Store in a dark pantry for up to one year.

Notes

- Makes 3 16-oz jars
- For the best flavor, wait 6 weeks before opening.
- Once opened, refrigerate.

Andrea Kristin lives with her husband and children on their organic market garden farm (@greyarrowfarm) in the Alberta prairies. Known for her expertise in growing and cooking with produce, her newly published book "Fresh Grown: Essential Guide to Use, Store, and Make the Most of Your Vegetables" has garnered rave reviews and #1 bestseller status on Amazon Canada. Available online and at major book retailers.

HERBAL
POTATO
GNOCCHI

BY HAILEY OF MOUNTAIN ROSE HERBS

There are some things in life best savored for their comforting simplicity. When potatoes, flour, eggs, and a pinch of salt become intertwined as one, the result is a delectable, pillowy-textured dumpling known as gnocchi (pronounced nyo-kee).

Originating from Italy, gnocchi is a variety of dumpling often paired with an equally delicious sauce such as browned butter and sage or classic tomato, fresh basil, and mozzarella. Aside from being irresistibly delicious and having a dreamy texture, the simplistic nature of gnocchi allows for a playground of versatility and creative additions.

This recipe incorporates a variety of herbal powders that not only add beautiful hues and flavors to the dish but also offer a plethora of vitamins and nutrients to balance the richly filling nature of gnocchi. Herbs such as spinach powder and beetroot powder turn otherwise muted beige dumplings into vibrant shades of grassy green and rosy pink that are nearly too beautiful to eat. Herbal powders, such as wheatgrass, kale and nettle are a fantastic way to add a nutrient boost to your diet. Spices such onion, garlic, and turmeric powders offer a bolder flavor. When you enjoy these plant-powered, decadent bites of potato bliss, you will taste exactly why.

Materials

1 lb. Yukon Gold potatoes or yellow potatoes
1 egg yolk
⅔ c organic all-purpose flour + more for dusting
1 tbsp herbal powder(s) of choice
½ tsp sea salt
Potato ricer or hand mill, optional
Rigagnocchi, optional

Method

Boil whole potatoes with skin on until fork tender, about 20-25 minutes. Place drained potatoes aside to cool.

Once potatoes have cooled just enough to handle (but still very warm), remove potato skins and pass peeled potatoes through a potato ricer or hand mill. If you don't have either of these on hand, smash with a fork till smooth.

In a separate bowl, add herbal powder(s) and flour. Mix until well combined.

Forming a well in the mashed potatoes, add egg yolk, half of the herbal powder flour, and salt. Fold mixture until a dough ball begins loosely forming. Sprinkle a bit more flour on top of the loose dough ball. Using your hand, gently punch down and fold the dough until a cohesive dough forms. It should be soft, but not sticky. Cover and rest for 10-15 minutes.

Method

Transfer dough to a lightly floured surface, and divide into four equal pieces. Roll each section into 1/2 in. wide logs. Cut logs into 1/2 in. pieces, about 20-25 per log. Place dough pieces on a lightly floured surface, avoiding each piece from touching to prevent sticking.

Using a flour-dusted rigagnocchi or fork, gently roll each piece across the ridged surface with your thumb to create grooves.

Once all gnocchi are rolled, bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Working in small batches, add gnocchi to boiling water.

Boil for 1-2 minutes until the gnocchi float to the top of the water.

Using a slotted spoon, remove gnocchi and add directly into your sauce of choice. Enjoy!

Notes

- Herbal powders may affect the flavor of the gnocchi, particularly if you incorporate a strongly flavored herb(s).
- If you don't plan to cook all prepared gnocchi at one time, freeze raw gnocchi and cook directly from the freezer as the directions state. Do not thaw beforehand.

Hailey grew up on a small rural farm in Oregon and has always had a passion for exploration, art, biology, and animals. These passions have led her through various careers including veterinary medicine, neurodiverse healthcare, pottery, and now as a Marketing Coordinator for Mountain Rose Herbs. She loves cooking nourishing plant-based food, snuggling with her kitty, and wandering around mossy creek beds looking for agates and bones to create jewelry with.

CRANBERRY SAUCE WITH A KICK

BY SUSAN ILKA TUTTLE

Have you ever made homemade cranberry sauce from scratch? It's so delicious, far better than what you might have tasted once upon a time from a can, and is worth making as a side dish for a variety of winter meals, especially for the holidays. Adding fresh horseradish root offers an unexpected zippy kick sure to wow your dinner guests.

Cranberries (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*) are probably best known in the herbalism world for their ability to prevent and support urinary tract infections, but they have also been shown to help reduce kidney inflammation. These tarty fruits are high in vitamin C and flavonoids that aid the body with inflammation and oxidation. Cranberry supports a healthy heart, cholesterol levels, and promotes healthy teeth and gums.

Cranberries are native plants to North America and grow in abundance in bogs along the eastern and western coasts during autumn. You can find fresh cranberries in your local grocery store when they are in season.

Horseradish root (*Armoracia rusticana*) is also good for helping clear bladder infections and kidney ailments, not to mention it readily clears the sinuses. This pungent root is used topically to soothe muscle and joint pain, although be aware that it does cause a rash for some.

The best way to obtain fresh horseradish root is to grow some in your garden and harvest it after the first frost, when the energy and nutrients of the plant move into the root. To store it, wash the root, pat it dry, and freeze it. You might be able to find fresh horseradish root from your local farmer or at a natural foods store. As a last resort, use jarred horseradish from the grocery store.

This special cranberry sauce pairs nicely with a variety of foods including meats like turkey, chicken, pork, or pot roast, and cheeses like brie, goat cheese, and cheddar. It makes a delicious appetizer when offered as a spread on a cheese and cracker plate or incorporated into a puff pastry made with brie. Bon appetit!

Materials

2 c cranberries, fresh
2 tbsp horseradish root, fresh
1 small orange
2 tbsp honey or to taste
Pinch cinnamon

Method

Using a zester, spice or cheese grater, remove the zest from the orange and set it aside. Squeeze the fresh juice from the orange and place it in a small cup or bowl.

Grate the horseradish root with a cheese grater or in a food processor.

Put the cranberries, prepared horseradish root, orange zest (saving a little bit for garnish) and orange juice into a pot over medium-high heat. The juice should cover the bottom of your pot, and if it doesn't, add a bit of water until the base of the pot is covered with liquid.

Stir often, until the cranberries start popping. Turn down the heat to medium and keep stirring until all cranberries have popped and the sauce thickens. Remove from the heat.

Add honey and a pinch of cinnamon.

Serve warm, garnished with a bit of orange zest. Refrigerate for up to one week.

Notes

- Yields 3 cups
- Fresh cranberries can be frozen for future use.
- If you prefer to use sugar instead of honey, use 1/4 cup of sugar.
- Grating horseradish root will make your eyes tear up like an onion does (only worse), so you may want to opt for using the food processor.
- If you are serving cranberry sauce that has been chilled in the refrigerator, first bring the chilled sauce to room temperature or reheat over low heat.

Susan Ilka Tuttle is a folk herbalist, forager, green witch, and practicing spirit medium living in the woods of Maine. Visit her botanicals shop inthewoodbotanicals.com, her mediumship site susantuttlespiritmessenger.com, and come say hello on Instagram @whisper_in_the_wood

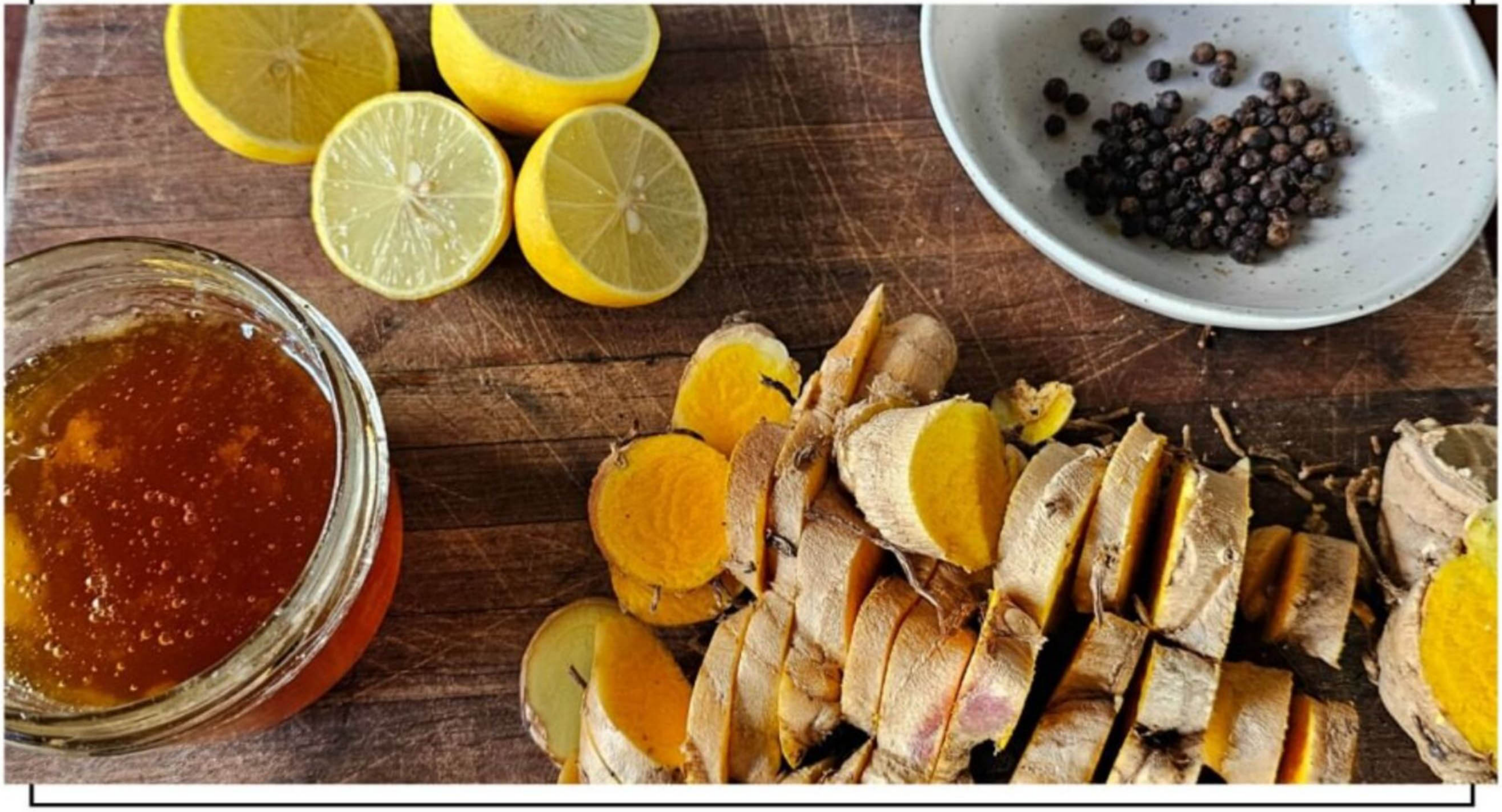
JAMU JUICE

BY BEC MCGUIRE

Jamu juice is an ancient medicinal drink found on the streets of the tropical islands of Indonesia. It's a blend of turmeric and ginger in water with black pepper added for absorbability and lemon and honey or sugar for sweetness. Yellow-stain-handed women carry bamboo baskets filled with jamu on their backs and travel through villages and city alleys selling their traditional medicinal beverage.

A simple combination of turmeric with its cousin ginger, plus black pepper, lemon, and honey can have profound effects. Turmeric is a great anti-inflammatory and powerful antioxidant. It helps increase docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) which is essential for brain development and function. Ginger aids inflammation and can be soothing to the digestive system. Lemon is full of vitamin C and helps to balance the flavors in the drink. Honey is an antioxidant powerhouse full of natural sweetness whilst the black pepper increases the bioavailability of the curcumin in the turmeric.

Jamu has a long history of use and is traditionally made differently in every village using accompanying herbs from the local landscape. There are many herbs that can be used such as galangal, fennel, tamarind, cinnamon and jasmine. It is simple to make and you can experiment with ingredient ratios. It has a strong flavor so it could be drunk as a tonic in the morning or between meals. Enjoy it cold during the day for refreshment or hot just before bedtime.



Materials

1 ½ c turmeric sliced, fresh
½ c ginger sliced, fresh
4 c water or coconut water
Juice of 1 lemon or 2 limes
4 tbsp honey or sugar
1 tsp black pepper

Method

Cut the fresh turmeric and ginger into thin slices. It is up to you to leave the skin on or to take it off.

Put turmeric, ginger, black pepper and water into a high-powered blender and blend for 1-2 minutes, until it is smooth.

Pour the drink into a pot and bring to a boil on the stove. Simmer for 20 minutes. Remove from the stove and let it cool.

Once it has cooled, strain through a fine sieve or piece of cloth. Add lemon and honey to taste and stir well.

Bottle and place in the fridge for up to 7 days.

Notes

- Jamu juice is best served chilled; however, it can be warmed if you are wanting a hot drink.
- Turmeric does stain, so be careful to wash your blender after use.
- It can be frozen for later use.

Bec is a radical herbalist, eco/biologist, farmer and mother living on Thaua country, Yuin Nation, NSW, Australia. She runs an off-grid permaculture farm and works from her hand-built apothecary. She runs a CSH (Community Supported Herbalism) box, now in its 6th year. Growing and making high quality medicine has been a passion for almost two decades. Connect with her on Instagram @wildwoodslane_apothecary or wildearthherbs.com

WINTER BLUES LATTE

BY LINDSEY MELOTT

Winter can be a season filled with beauty and wonder. Silent, snowy landscapes, frost-kissed trees, crisp air, cozy fires. But for some, the shorter days, longer nights and frigid temperatures can be challenging.

When the dreary winter days drag on, seek comfort in the warmth of a soothing cup of tea. Not only does this blend help combat those winter blues, but it is quite literally blue! Butterfly pea creates the dreamy blue from its anthocyanin properties, making it the star of the show for this blend. But we can't forget about the other equally important mood-boosting herbs such as heart-opening rose, nervous system-soothing ashwagandha, uplifting tulsi and warming cardamom. These can help nourish, revitalize and keep our spirits up through the dark days of winter.

Slowly sip this tea when wrapped in your favorite blanket with a good book or a journal. Be fully present in each moment and allow the warmth and lightness of the cozy beverage to wash over you. Make this a winter ritual by lighting candles and turning on your soothing music or simply allow yourself to tune into the sounds of nature outside your window.

Materials

½ tbsp butterfly pea flowers
1 tsp rose petals
1 tsp cardamom seeds
1 tsp tulsi
1 tsp ashwagandha root
Milk of choice
Sweetener of choice

Method

Place herbs in a teapot with a strainer.

Fill with 1 cup of boiling water and allow to steep for 5-10 minutes.

Strain tea into your favorite mug adding milk and/or sweetener to taste.

Lindsey is an herbalist and wild mama who currently lives as a full time nomad. She can be found frolicking in the forests or swimming in wild water with her little fam. She loves connecting others to the simplicity of working with herbal medicine, specifically in finding deep nourishment. Find her adventures on Instagram at @lindseymelott

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ADAPTOGENIC

HOT CHOCOLATE

BY CATARINA SEIXAS

With its morning sparkles and hidden wonders, winter is a season full of magic. In its rightful duality, it can also be a challenging time for many. It's easy to allow the weight of the season to drag one down, with the bitter cold and lack of sunlight exacerbating existing feelings of sadness or worry. Things can feel a little heavy, much like the snow on a tree's branches, or the pile of leaves that insists on cluttering the rainwater's path. While waiting for the sun's return, winter might just be a fitting season to lean on to adaptogens and mood-lifting practices.

What are adaptogens? Put simply, this class of tonic herbs supports the body in adapting to conditions of stress. They increase our resistance to (and recovery from) stressors, without acting upon a specific area of the body, but on the body as a whole. Adaptogen herbs include Asian ginseng (*Panax ginseng*), ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*), licorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), and reishi (*Ganoderma lucidum*), among others.

In addition to ashwagandha root and reishi fruiting body, both herbs with immunomodulating and nervine actions, this recipe also features ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) root, a winter classic for its warming energetics and antiviral, stimulating actions.

To top your beverage, you may want to indulge in whipped cream decorated with dried edible flowers. Bringing in colorful blooms is a beautiful way of welcoming in joy and the memory of warm, sunny days.

Favorite edible flowers to dry throughout the warm months and use for this are borage (*Borago officinalis*), pansies (*Viola tricolor*), calendula (*Calendula officinalis*) petals, and lavender (*Lavandula spp.*) buds. Either or all could add lovely finishing touches to this recipe.

Hot Chocolate Materials

2 c dairy or plant milk
1 tbsp cocoa powder
1 tbsp local honey or vegan alternative
1 tsp reishi, powdered
½ tsp ashwagandha root, powdered
½ tbsp ginger root, powdered
Sprinkle cinnamon, powdered

Floral Whipped Cream Materials

½ c dairy or alternative cream, chilled
½ tbsp edible flowers of choice

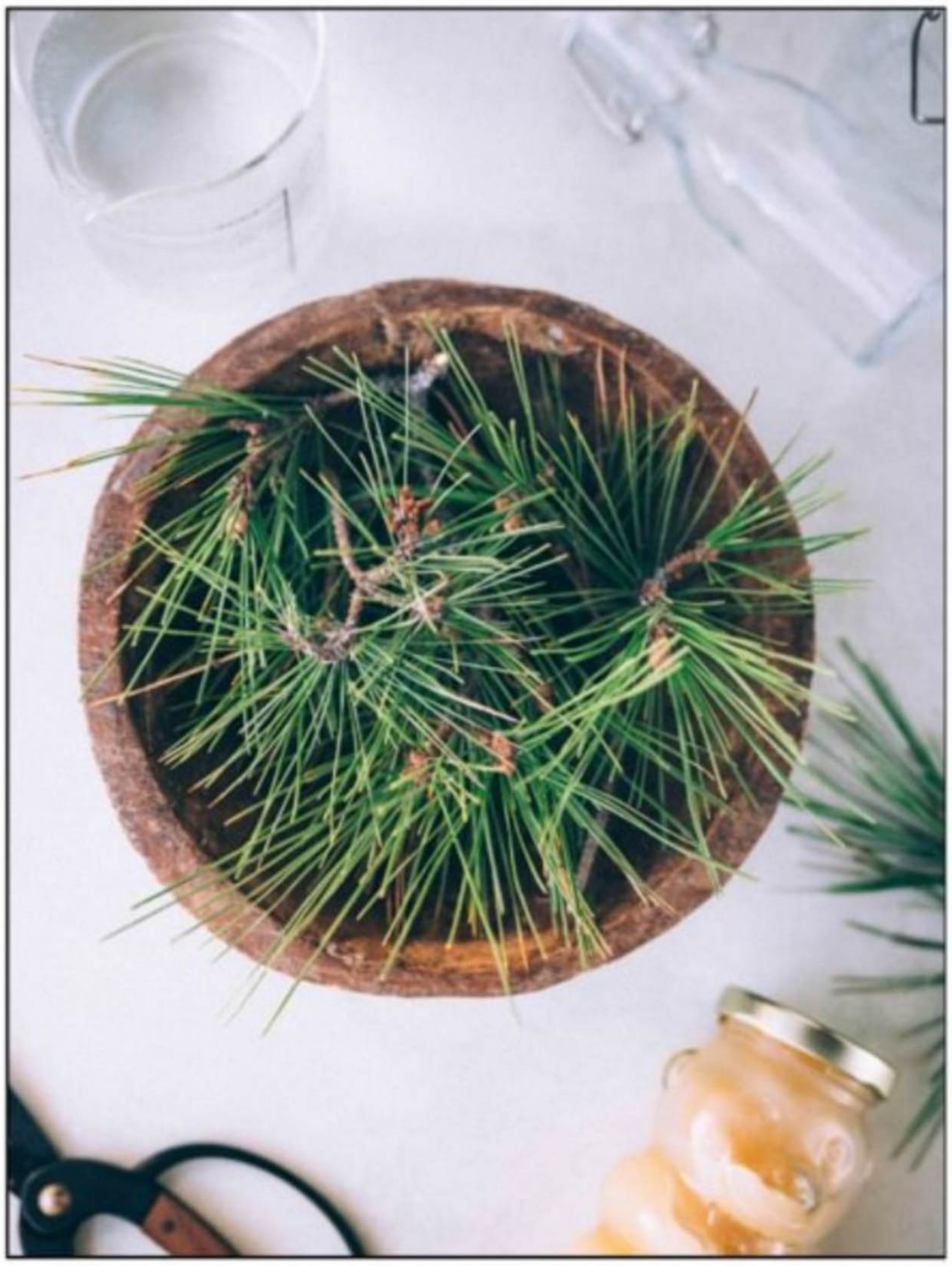
Method

If you want to incorporate whipped cream on top, prepare it first by beating the cream with a manual whisk until it's light and fluffy. Fold in the edible flowers.

Heat the milk on the stove and add all ingredients, except cinnamon, stirring well to combine, and simmer for about 5 minutes, without boiling.

Pour the chocolate into mugs and top with the whipped cream, if using. Sprinkle with cinnamon, and even more edible flowers if you need some extra floral joy in your day.

Catarina Seixas is a Land steward, mother, fiber artist, bioregionalist, folk herbalist, and writer. She lives with her family on the hills of central Portugal, her native land, in a small hand-built stone house surrounded by gardens and animals. Cat is the author of The Wild Craft (Hardie Grant, 2022), and you can connect with her at theolivetreesandthemoon.com



FERMENTED
PINE NEEDLE
SODA
BY COLLEEN CODEKAS

Pine needle soda is a naturally fermented drink made with foraged ingredients. It is fizzy and has a minty, citrusy, and evergreen flavor. This recipe is quick and easy to make and is a fun foraging and fermentation project for winter!

Any edible conifer needles, like pine, fir, or spruce, can make fermented pine needle soda. Pine and other conifer needles have natural yeasts that cause fermentation when water and sweeteners are added. Be sure to properly identify the pine tree before using. Yew trees are highly toxic and should not be used.

The sweetener needs to have some kind of sugar in it, so honey, maple syrup, white sugar, or brown sugar will work, but sugar-free substitutes such as aspartame or sucralose will not promote the desired effect. It's also important to use filtered or bottled water to ensure nothing in it will disrupt the fermentation process. This project takes about three days to ferment and turns out bubbly and refreshing!

Pine needles have tons of benefits, namely their high vitamin C content plus a boost of vitamin A. Drinking fermented pine needle soda has more vitamin C than a glass of orange juice! Pine and other conifer needles have antibacterial and pain-relieving properties, too. Medicinally, pine needles are an expectorant for coughs and can help relieve chest congestion.

Once the pine needle soda is ready to drink, it can be stored in the refrigerator, stopping the fermentation. Serve over ice and garnish with a lemon, lime, or orange slice. This soda is often called pine needle Sprite because the flavor is similar. It's perfect for a wintery refreshment!

Materials

1 c pine needles
1 ½ c filtered water
2 tbsp raw honey or sugar
Lemon, lime, or orange slices

Method

If the pine needles are dirty, gently rinse them in cool water.

Put the pine needles into a 16 ounce flip top bottle. Add the honey and filtered water to the bottle using a small funnel if necessary. Leave 1-2 inches of headspace at the top.

Close the lid and shake the bottle a bit to distribute the honey. Put the bottle in a warm (not too hot or too cold) place to ferment - a kitchen counter usually works great.

The soda should start fermenting and producing carbonation after 2-3 days. Be careful opening the bottle as it could have a lot of bubbles! Don't let the bottles sit longer than 3 days without opening it so that the pressure doesn't build up too much.

Strain the soda with a fine mesh sieve and serve over ice with a lemon, lime or orange slice for garnish.

Notes

- Any edible conifer needles such as pine, fir, or spruce can be used for making this soda.
- Whole pine needle bundles with a small bit of the branch still intact seemed to ferment better and quicker than cut pine needles, but feel free to experiment and see what works best for you.
- Burping the bottles is not necessary unless you want to ferment them longer than 3 days.

Colleen Codekas is passionate about using foraged ingredients for food and medicine! She lives with her little family of three in Vermont. She is the author of the book Healing Herbal Infusions, and four ebooks: Wildcrafting Weeds, Healing Kitchen Herbs, The Backyard Forest Garden, and Simple Mead Making. Learn more at Grow Forage Cook Ferment: growforagecookferment.com and on social media @growforagecookferment. Photography by Stephanie Mary @mytinylagunakitchen

MUGWORT
DREAMING TRUFFLES
BY TARA LANICH-LABRIE

Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*) has a long history of medicinal, culinary and magical use. Combining this silvery moon plant with chocolate and marigolds is one of the best ways to celebrate the winter season of dreaming.

Mugwort, also known as croneswort in some circles, is a plant that has been revered for thousands of years across the world, from Asia to North America, Africa to Ireland. It is likely endemic to Europe and Asia, but it has migrated across the entire world and grows on every continent except for Antarctica. Mugwort has been used traditionally as an antioxidant, antibacterial, analgesic, antifungal, and it is quite bitter, making it a perfect digestive, increasing bile and helping with absorption.

Artemisia vulgaris was named for the deity, Artemis, who is known to be a protector of women and the Goddess of the Moon. The leaves resemble the moon's glow with a silvery, dusty underside. Mugwort is known as a teacher plant and the "Mother of Herbs" by several cultures.

Mugwort can be a powerfully effective dreaming herb and is known in many cultures for its divinatory properties. In China, mugwort is burned with the smoke being known to aid in communication with the spirit realm and in the recollection and enhancement of dreams. In Traditional Chinese Medicine, mugwort is used in the healing practice of moxabustion to help heal the physical and energetic body. Mugwort has been used as an oneirogen for millenia, said to enhance the dream state and create more vivid or even lucid dreams.

Marigolds are a hearty garden addition, a guardian plant with a long history of indigenous use as a medicine and food plant and ritual use in many places in the world from Tibet to Mexico. The marigolds on top are a vibrant balance to this dreamy dark treat.

Mugwort grows nearly everywhere in the world, and it can be foraged or found online at herbal apothecaries or bulk herb suppliers. You can use either the dry plant or the fresh plant for the truffles. If you do not have access to mugwort, try using other herbs or spices you love and have on hand like cinnamon and vanilla with a dash of cayenne, or lavender and rose.

These truffles are a creamy, dark chocolate infused with mugwort, lightly salted with a crisp shell, calling us towards the inward turning and deep dreams of winter. They are best enjoyed by candle- or moonlight, with a warm mug of your favorite moon milk or tea, and your favorite book.

Ganache Materials

1 ¾ c 72% dark chocolate, chopped
1 c coconut cream
3 tbsp mugwort leaves, fresh or 3 tbsp, dry
2 tsp vanilla extract

Chocolate Shell Materials

1 ¾ c 72% dark chocolate or chocolate chips, chopped
1 tsp coconut oil

Decorative Materials

Small mugwort leaves, dried
Marigold or calendula petals, dried
Finishing salt

Method

First, add the coconut milk and mugwort leaves to a small pot on the stove and bring them to a simmer. Turn off the heat and cover for at least 20 minutes, letting the mugwort steep and infuse the coconut milk. If the leaves are fresh or if they have rehydrated enough to blend, add the mixture to a blender and blend on high speed until it is completely mixed.

Make a double boiler or bain-marie using a heat safe bowl set on top of a pot of gently boiling water. The water should not touch the bowl while it boils, or it will scorch the chocolate. Add the chopped chocolate to the bowl and warm until melting, and then add the coconut cream and mugwort mixture, stirring quickly to incorporate.

Take the bowl off the heat and whisk in the vanilla extract. Place the bowl in the refrigerator for around 1-2 hours, or until the chocolate ganache is soft but solid all the way through.

Use a spoon to scoop out about a tablespoon at a time of the ganache, rolling it in your hands placing it on a parchment-lined baking sheet. You will get messy, so you can rinse your hands every 3-4 truffles or wear disposable gloves, if needed. Once all the truffles are rolled, place them back in the freezer to harden.

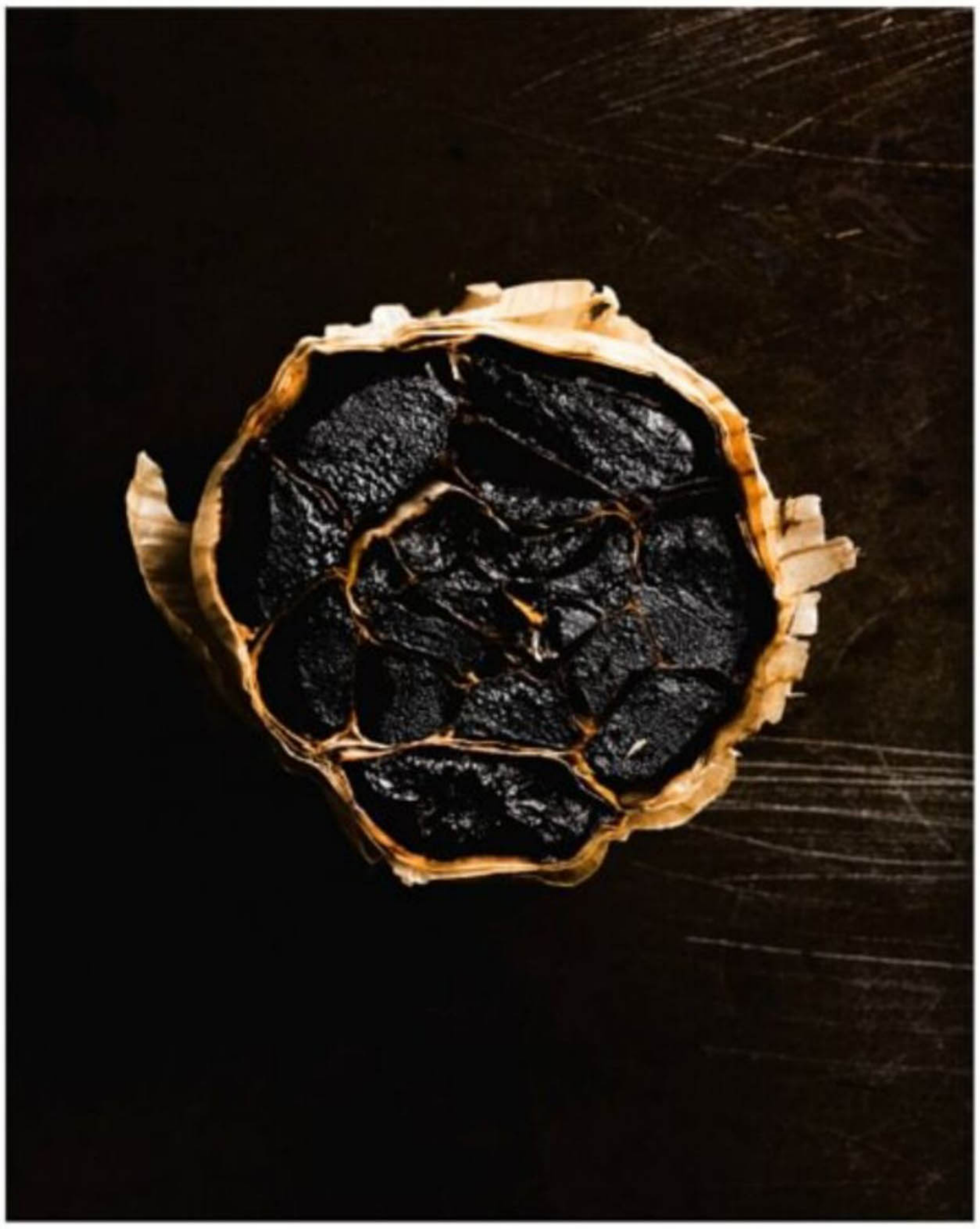
Prepare the coating by adding the additional chocolate to a double boiler. Warm it and add the coconut oil. You can also microwave the coating in 10 second increments to melt. Stir well.

Remove the truffles from the freezer and dip each one in the chocolate coating, placing them on a parchment-lined sheet to harden. Sprinkle with a little mugwort leaf, finishing salt or sugar, or an edible flower, like marigolds.

Notes

- Like all plants, mugwort's effect may be different for everyone, so please use caution if trying this plant for
- the first time. Mugwort and marigolds can be abortifacients, so these plants should not be used by anyone pregnant or trying to become pregnant.
- If you want to skip the coating, you can roll them in cinnamon, cocoa powder, or just enjoy them as is!

Tara Lanich-LaBrie is an author, culinary herbalist, farmer, forager and cook, pairing the love of plants with a love of gathering, creating, and sharing food. Her first book, Foraged and Grown is out now. Find Tara on Instagram @themedicinecircle and at themedicinecircle.com



BLACK GARLIC

CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

BY KRISTIN GRAVES

Black garlic is a beautiful, heat-aged ingredient with dramatic flair. The dark bulbs are not grown that way; they're actually fresh bulbs that have been slowly fermented, transforming both the flavor and color of the garlic.

The process originated in Korea centuries ago. A consistent heat is applied over many days in a humidity-controlled environment, resulting in the caramelization of the natural sugars within the bulbs. This caramelization is called the Maillard reaction, named for a French chemist; it describes the reaction of amino acids and simple sugars that causes the cloves to shift to the darker shade. In traditional fermentation chambers, the Maillard process could take several months, but modern technology has sped the process up somewhat with dedicated black garlic machines that heat similarly to rice cookers.

The inky colored cloves are loaded with more than twice the amount of antioxidants and taste somewhat sweet, with hints of licorice and balsamic vinegar. The overall flavor effect is quite impressive, making black garlic a powerful addition to any recipe.

You can use black garlic in place of regular garlic, although it does have a distinctive flavor—a strong umami essence with a slightly milder garlicky taste. Gone is the fiery punch of fresh garlic, and in its place are notes of molasses and caramel, proving there can be a softer side to the cloves.

Aside from the antioxidant boost, the best thing about black garlic is that it can be both savory and sweet. Because of that, you can enjoy black garlic raw, on its own, or paired deliciously with most meats, sharp cheeses, mushrooms, and even chocolate.

The unique sweet flavor makes black garlic fun to work with, giving you ample opportunities to create the unexpected, like chocolate chip cookies. You will notice that the cloves are slightly soft and somewhat squishy, making them easy to chop or mash, whichever the recipe requires.

Chocolate and black garlic might be thought of as an unlikely pair. But when put together, the black garlic draws out the richness of the chocolate. These are not your usual chocolate chip cookies, but they are incredibly decadent and very tasty.

Materials

1 c all-purpose flour
½ tsp salt
½ tsp baking soda
½ c butter, softened
½ c granulated sugar
¼ c packed brown sugar
1 egg
16 oz semisweet chocolate chips
2 black garlic bulbs

Method

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Peeled and cut black garlic into small pieces.

Sift together the flour, salt, and baking soda into a small bowl.

Cream together the butter, sugars, and egg in a large mixing bowl, using a stand mixer. Stir in the chocolate chips and garlic. Add the flour mixture and mix until combined.

Drop the batter by teaspoonfuls, about 1 inch apart, on ungreased baking sheets. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes, until edges are browned. Let stand for 30 seconds before transferring the cookies to wire racks.

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Kristin Graves is a fifth-generation farmer in Alberta, Canada. In addition to running her vegetable CSA, she focuses on growing fresh garlic for local markets, shipping seed bulbs across Canada, and creating unique seasonings for garlic lovers and local chefs. Her website is fifthgengardens.ca

Harvest

Grow + Forage

Maria Ilves

FORAGING WILD JUNIPER BERRIES

BY CONNIE BYERS

More than 60 species of juniper can be found worldwide. Some varieties grow as low sprawling shrubs, while others grow upright as trees. In North America, 13 Indigenous species grow wild, and several more are commercially cultivated for landscaping. The most common types of wild juniper include common juniper (*Juniperus communis*), eastern juniper, also known as red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), and Utah juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*).

While all juniper species produce berries, not all are edible. For example, the tam juniper (*Juniperus sabina*), a popular landscaping shrub, is toxic from its branches to its berries and should be avoided. Other varieties with toxic berries include blue star juniper (*Juniperus squamata*) and prickly juniper (*Juniperus oxycedrus*). Therefore, correctly identifying the tree you plan to harvest from is essential.

Anyone familiar with the juniper tree will immediately recognize juniper berries, but many are unaware that the berries are both edible and medicinal. What may be surprising is that those dusty blue spheres are not actually a berry. Instead, they are fused female seed cones, similar to the pinecone. However, unlike the pinecone, these cones are round and unusually fleshy with merged scales, giving them their signature berry-like appearance. Only the female trees produce berries. If you find a patch of juniper and you don't see berries on the first tree, check them all. The males and females are typically intermingled.

Juniper berries are technically classified as a spice but are also considered a food and an herb. They are the only official spice to come from a conifer tree, and with the exception of pine nuts, juniper berries are also the only common food that comes from a conifer tree.

In the culinary world, juniper is probably best known as the flavoring in gin. But its culinary repertoire far exceeds the cocktail shelf. The berry has a long tradition of flavoring meats, sausage, and wild game. Native tribes of the southwest traditionally cook corn dishes with juniper ash, creating a process called "nixtamalization," which breaks down the outer shell of the corn, enhancing the flavor while increasing the amount of absorbable calcium, niacin, and vitamin B3.

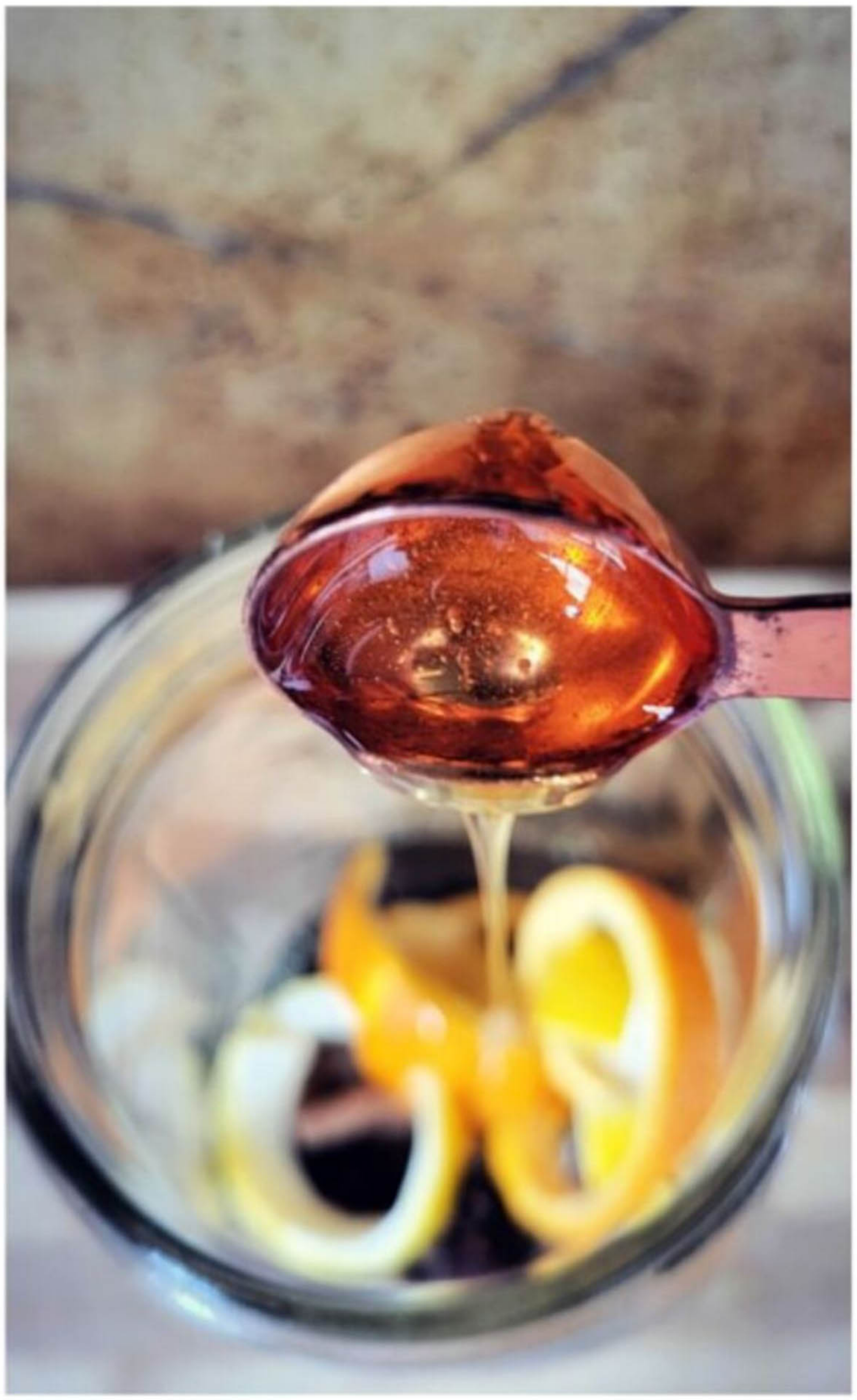
In the medicinal realm, juniper is antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, antirheumatic, carminative, diuretic, digestive, emmenagogue, and urinary antimicrobial. It is high in vitamin C, making it an excellent choice for winter tinctures, teas, and elixirs to combat the cold and flu season. Juniper is also one of the few plants with scientific research backing its use in managing glucose levels in people with diabetes.

While juniper berries have numerous health benefits, it's important to note that they can be potentially unsafe for long-term usage, past 4 consecutive weeks, as they may cause kidney issues. Because juniper stimulates the contraction of smooth muscles, it should be avoided if pregnant or nursing. Juniper berries are contraindicated for those suffering from inflammatory bowel diseases or kidney diseases. It's also important to avoid combining them with prescription medications for diabetes, glucose regulation, or hypoglycemia.

Always practice sustainable foraging, and never completely decimate the berries from a single tree. When little else is available in the winter, these fleshy little cones are a food source for birds, chipmunks, mice, opossums, voles, coyotes, red squirrels, and foxes.

The berries take up to 18 months to fully ripen, and you'll often see both the pale green, immature berries on the same branch as the deep purple, mature berries. They are best harvested late fall to early winter. Ripe berries will be dark blue/purple with a dusty white coating. The dusty white coating on the berries is a naturally occurring wild yeast that can be used to create sourdough starters!

To harvest, carefully remove the fully ripe berries from the branches by hand. It's best to wear gloves as the needles of the juniper can be quite sharp. Berries can be used fresh or dried. Place the berries on a screen or in a dehydrator in a single layer to dry them. Once the berries are thoroughly dried, they can be stored in a glass jar for up to a year or until they begin to lose color. For long-term storage, the dried berries may be stored in the freezer.



Winter Gin

The words gin and juniper have a common Latin root. The name gin is derived from the old English word *genever*, which is related to the French word *genièvre*, which are both ultimately derived from *juniperus*, the Latin for juniper. Traditionally, gin was made by simply infusing a neutral spirit with juniper berries and other botanicals. While most distilleries use a much more complicated process nowadays, you can create a rather unique gin right in your home.

Materials

4 tbsp juniper berries
2 ½" x 3" pieces lemon rind
2 ½" x 3" pieces orange rind
2 tsp raw honey
2 star anise pods
12 black peppercorns
1 tsp nutmeg
1 cinnamon stick
1 tbsp thyme
48 oz vodka

Method

Combine all of your aromatic herbs, spices, juniper berries, and citrus peels, plus honey in a large glass jar. Pour the vodka in and shake to combine.

Place the bottle in a cool, dark place for 24 hours, giving it a shake once or twice during that time.

At the 24-hour mark, your infused gin will be a rich golden color. Taste the gin to determine if the flavors are deep enough to meet your taste. If you prefer a richer flavor, you can leave it for up to another 24 hours.

Once you're happy with the flavor, sieve the gin, bottle it, and label it.

Connie believes in the history and value of working with native plants. She can be found on her 36-acre Colorado homestead, where she forages or grows most of the herbs used in her botanical brand, Byers Ranch Apothecary. You can learn more about her and shop the apothecary line on her website, thisunboundlife.com, or Instagram, @thisunboundlife.blog

WINTER
WINDFALL FORAGING
BY ERIN HARWOOD

Winter windstorms create ideal conditions for foraging. After a storm, nature reveals hidden treasures on the fringes and floor of the forest, offering a unique opportunity to discover and collect plants for the home apothecary. Gathering fallen branches and slow growing lichen brought down by the wind ensures no harm is done to living trees or delicate ecosystems.

Foraging Tips

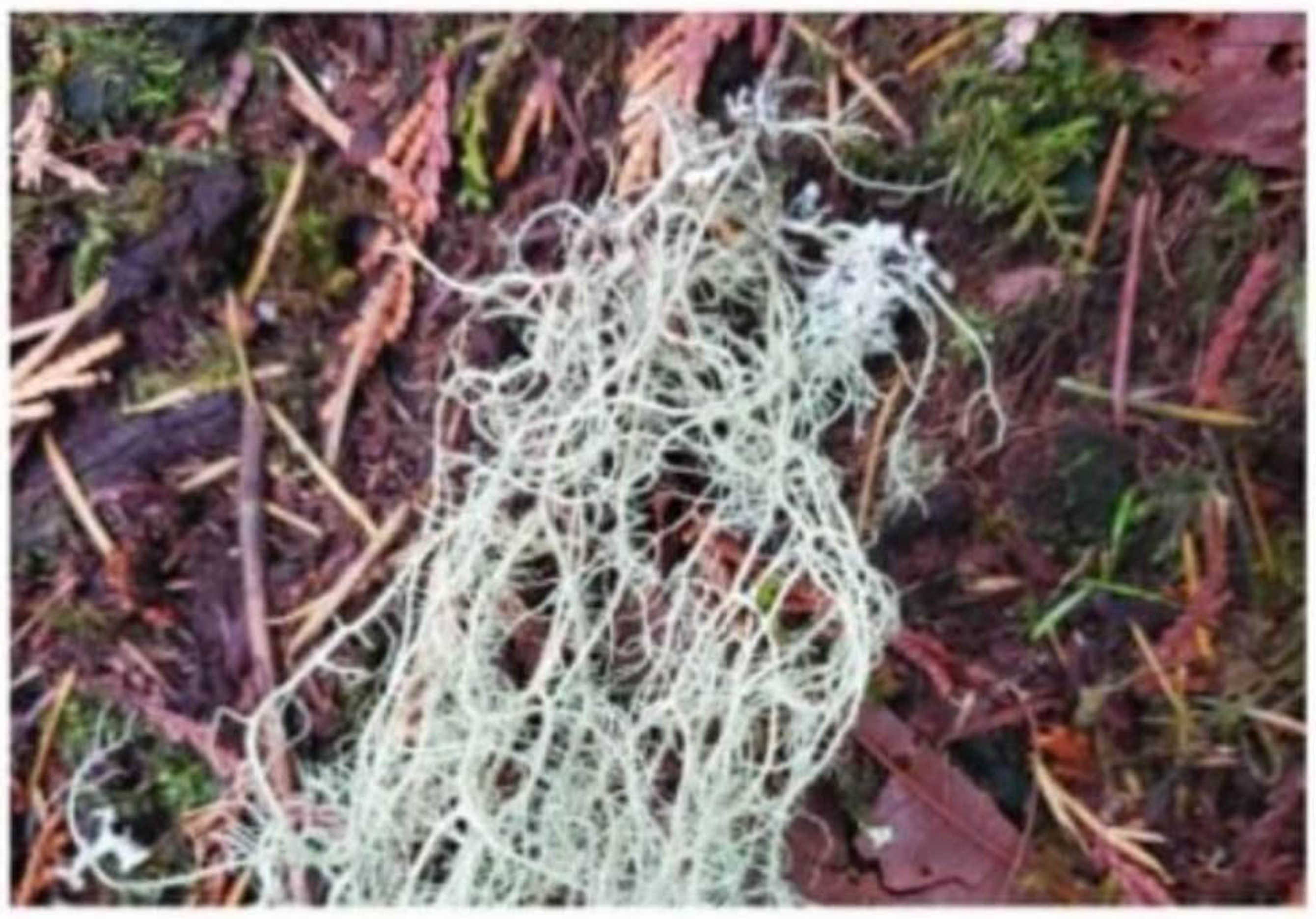
Timing The best time to forage is the calm after a windstorm, as the freshly fallen branches, buds, and other plant materials are abundant and easy to spot, before they degrade or become hidden under debris.

Mindful + Ethical Gathering Only harvest what is needed, leaving some behind for other creatures, and be mindful of the ecological balance. Ensure any foraging does not harm the plants or their habitats.

Safety Assess the area for any remaining hazards such as unstable branches, slippery ground, or debris while traveling along. Wear appropriate footwear and gear, and avoid venturing into areas with damaged trees that could still pose a danger.

Winter foraging offers a surprising abundance and variety of plant material, even in this season when plants are mostly dormant. Lichens, like lungwort and beard lichen, often fall from trees and can be harvested for their medicinal uses. Fallen branches from trees like Douglas fir, western red cedar, and cottonwood provide valuable needles and buds for teas, salves, and more.

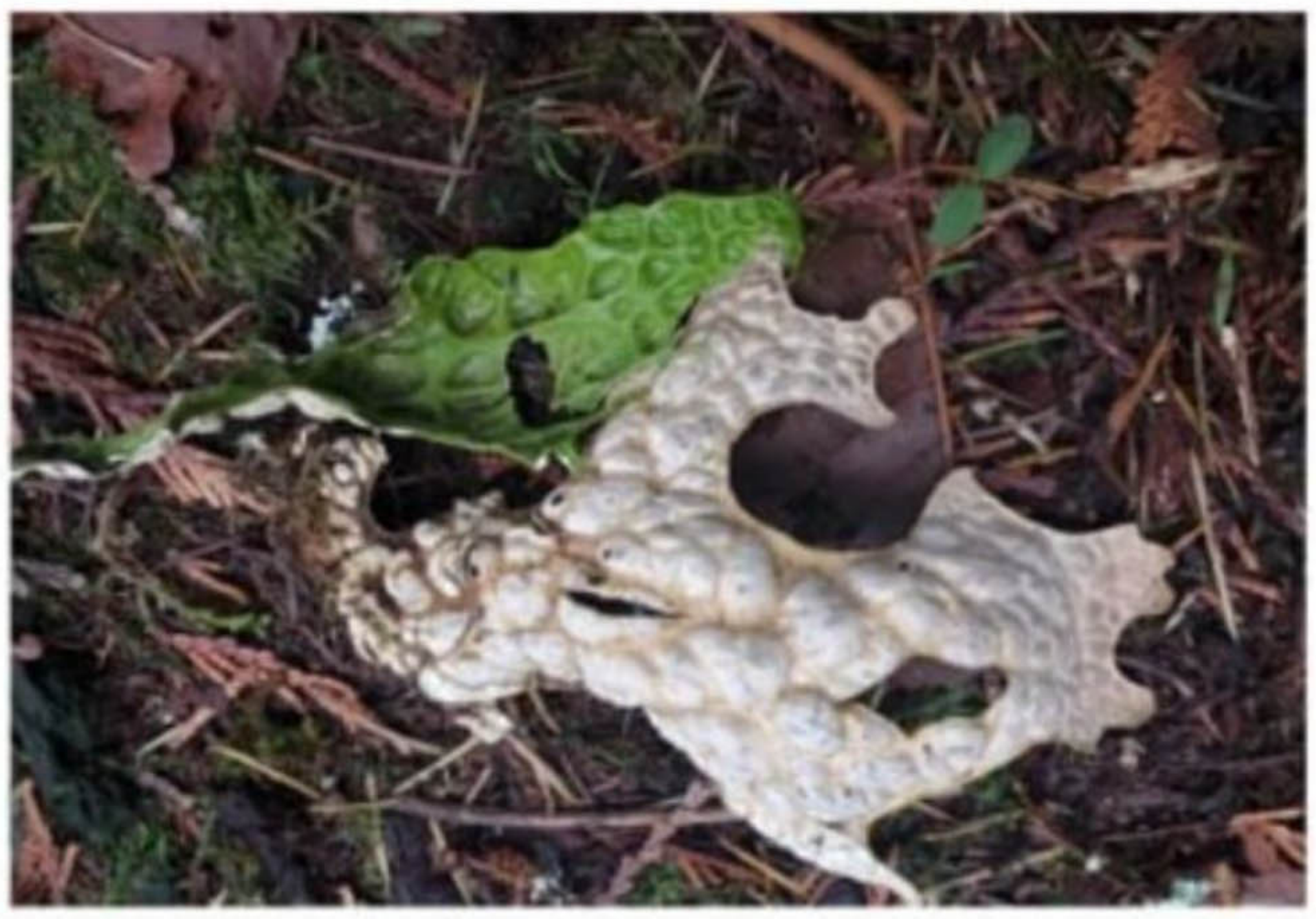
Exploring after a windstorm provides a rewarding opportunity to connect with nature. By being observant and knowledgeable about what to look for, anyone can enjoy the bounty that winter foraging offers.



BEARD LICHEN
Usnea spp

Two different varieties grow in North America – long, hanging strands or short, stringy tufts. The key to knowing it's Usnea is a whitish central cord that is strongly elastic. Incredibly slow growing, it is best harvested from fallen fir and pine branches. They contain medicine that can stimulate and support the immune system, especially when it is battling viral and bacterial infections. The most common preparation for this lichen is a double extract tincture.

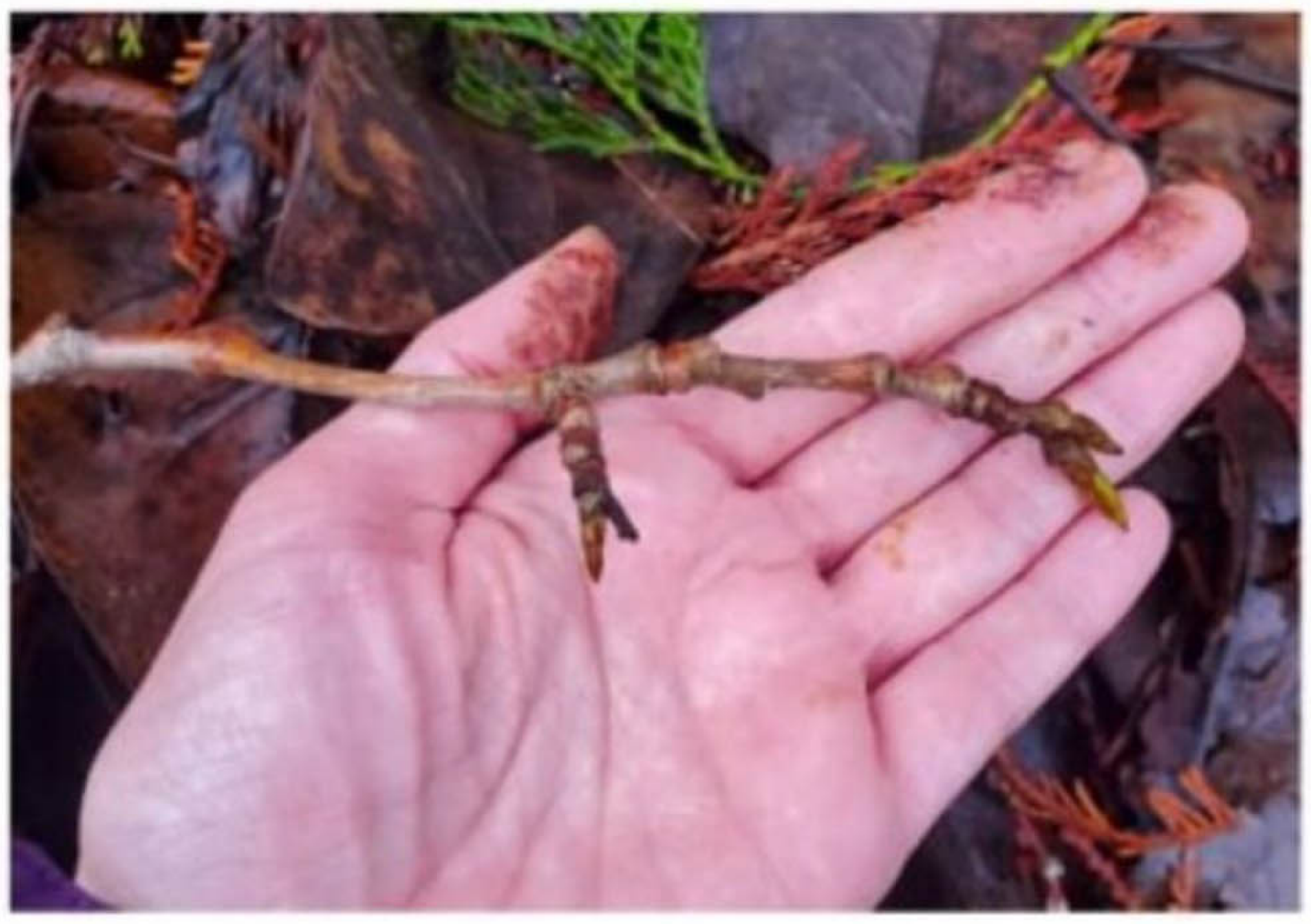
LICHEN



LUNGWORT LICHEN
Lobaria pulmonaria

This distinctive lichen is easily recognizable by its striking white color on the bottom, bright green top, unique bumpy texture, and lobed shape. It grows in damp shady forests on both coniferous and deciduous trees. A decoction of dried lungwort can help soothe dry, persistent coughs.

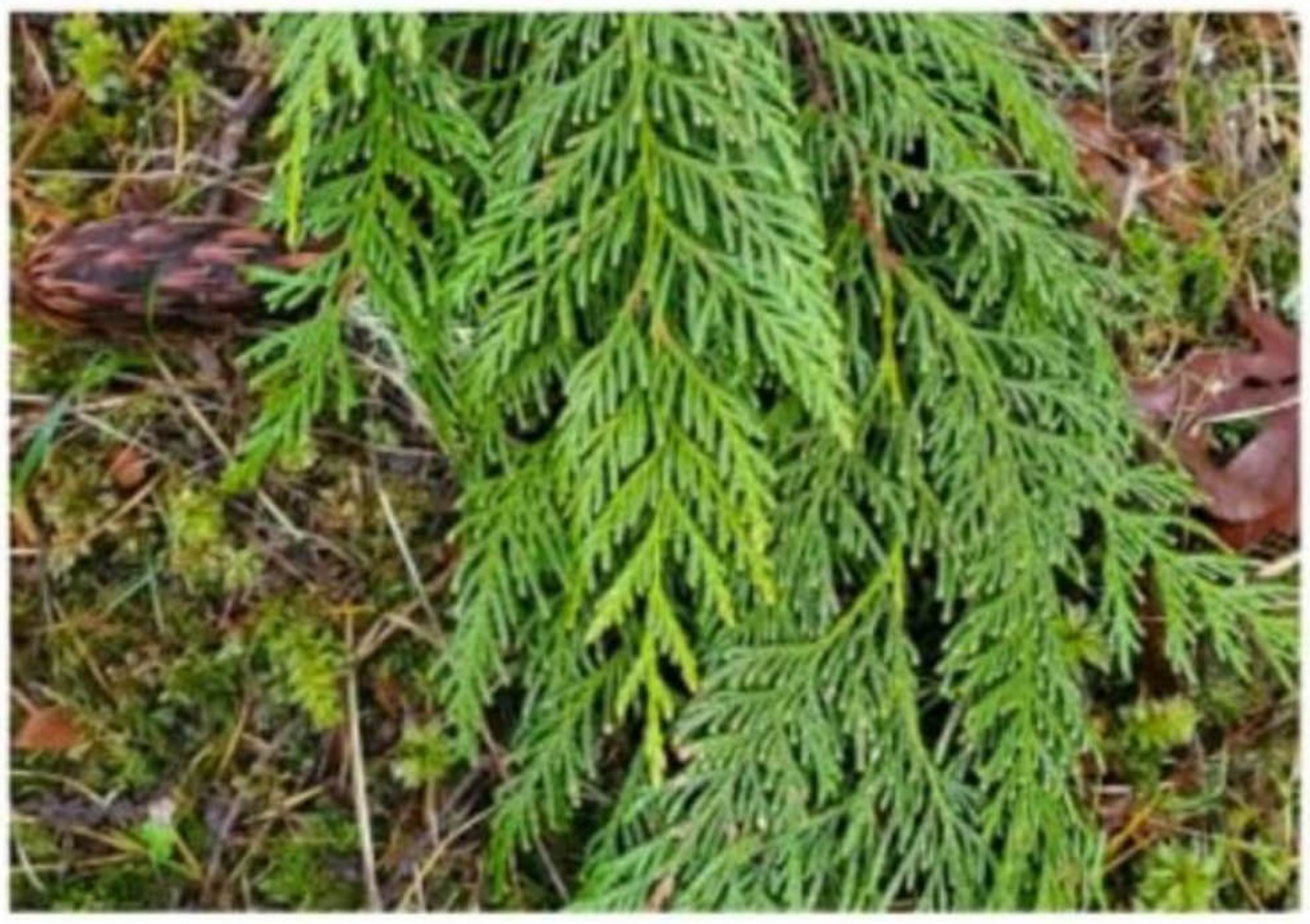
BUDS, BRANCHES + BARK



BLACK COTTONWOOD

Populus balsamifera

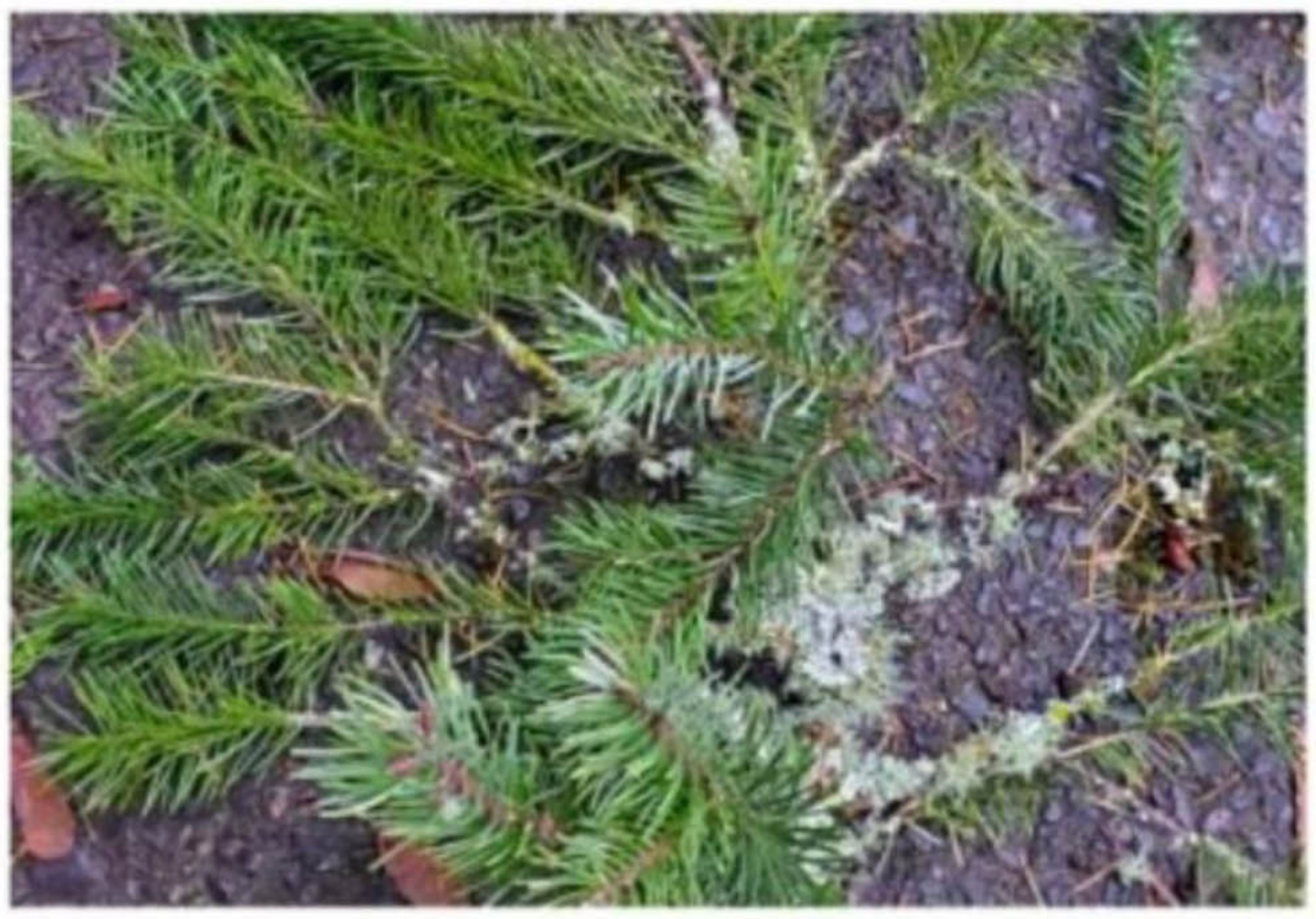
Look for fallen branches of this grey, rough-barked tree near water bodies, as cottonwoods thrive along the edge of streams and rivers. To identify cottonwood buds, observe their shiny, resinous surfaces, which often have a pleasant aroma reminiscent of propolis. The sticky buds, rich in resin, can be harvested for infusion into oils or salves.



WESTERN RED CEDAR

Thuja plicata

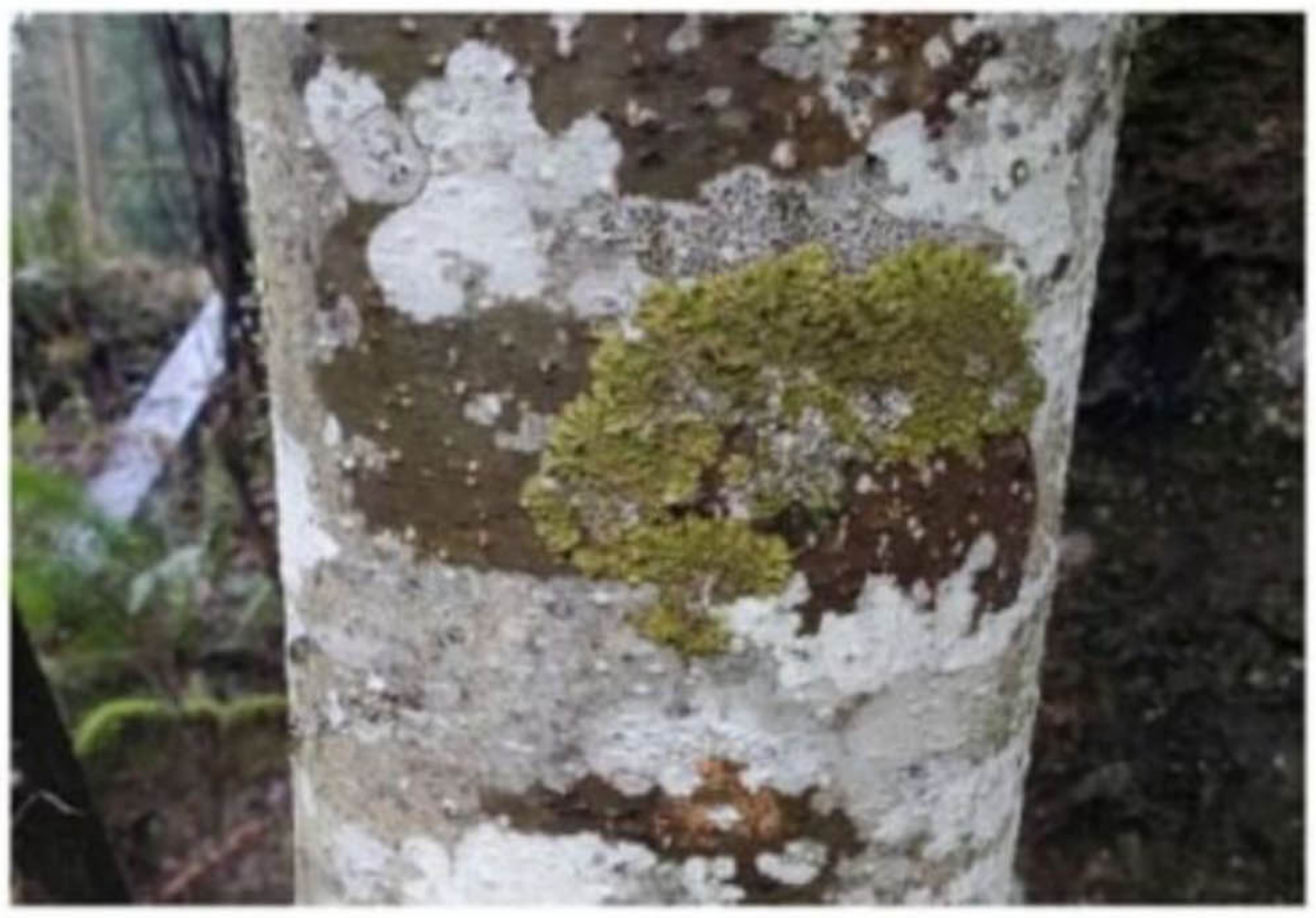
Gather fallen branches from this coniferous tree with overlapping scale-like leaves that have a vibrant green color. Note the distinct J-shaped limbs and reddish-brown, stringy bark. The leaves are valuable for teas, tinctures, infused oils, salves, and sinus steams. The aromatic qualities of cedar are also lovely in stove top simmer pots or incense burn bundles.



DOUGLAS FIR

Pseudotsuga menziesii

Look for fresh, green needles when gathering, and avoid those that appear brown or dry. These trees have deeply furrowed, dark grey bark, streaked with reddish brown, often covered with patches of lichen and moss. Fallen branches from this tree provide needles rich in vitamin C, which make a great addition to teas. The resinous needles are supportive in stove top simmer pots or sinus steams. Needles can also be infused in honey, vinegar, sugar and salt for a wide variety of culinary uses. *Carefully identify trees as a toxic look alike is the Pacific Yew which can be confused for a fir tree.*

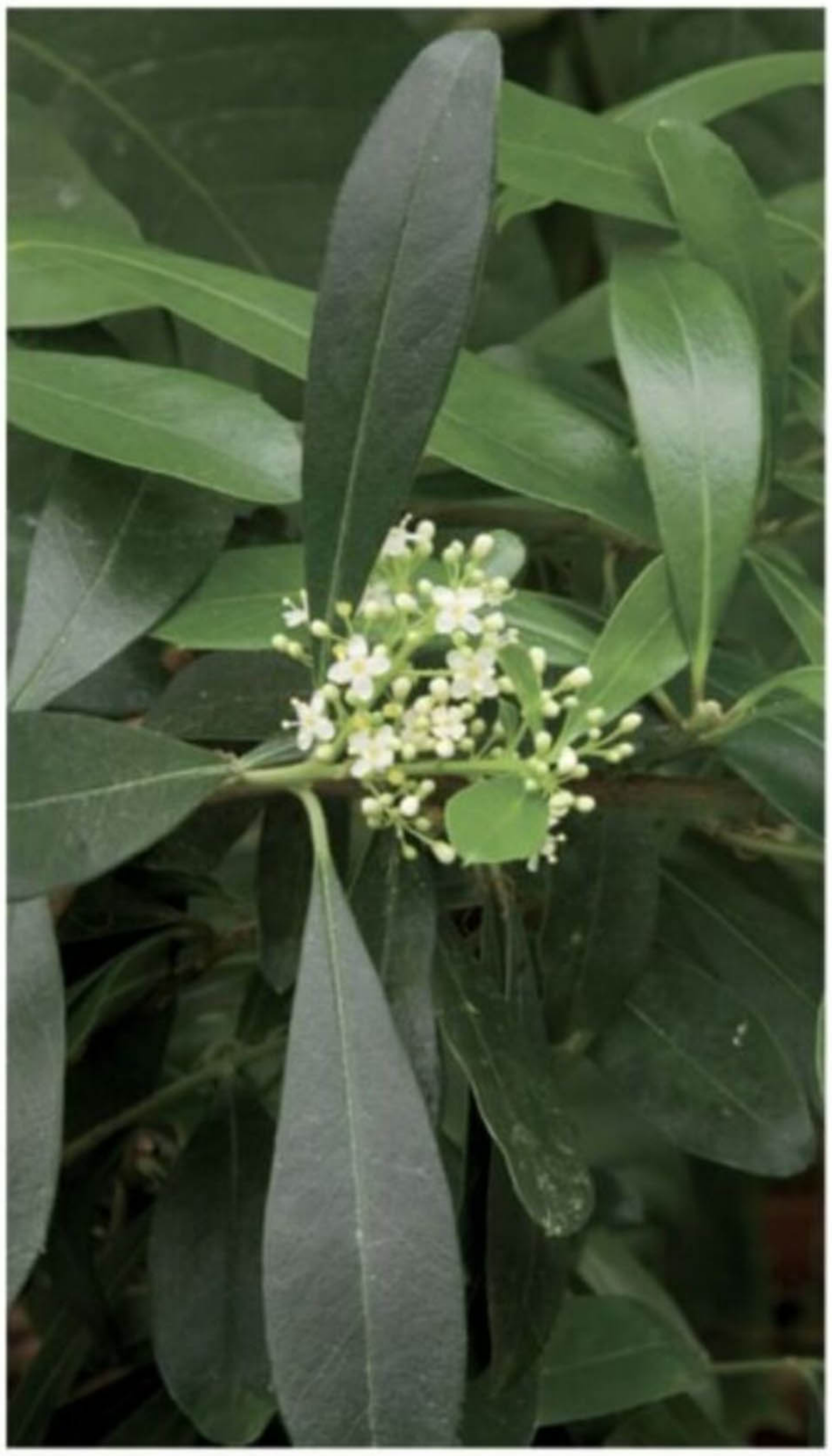


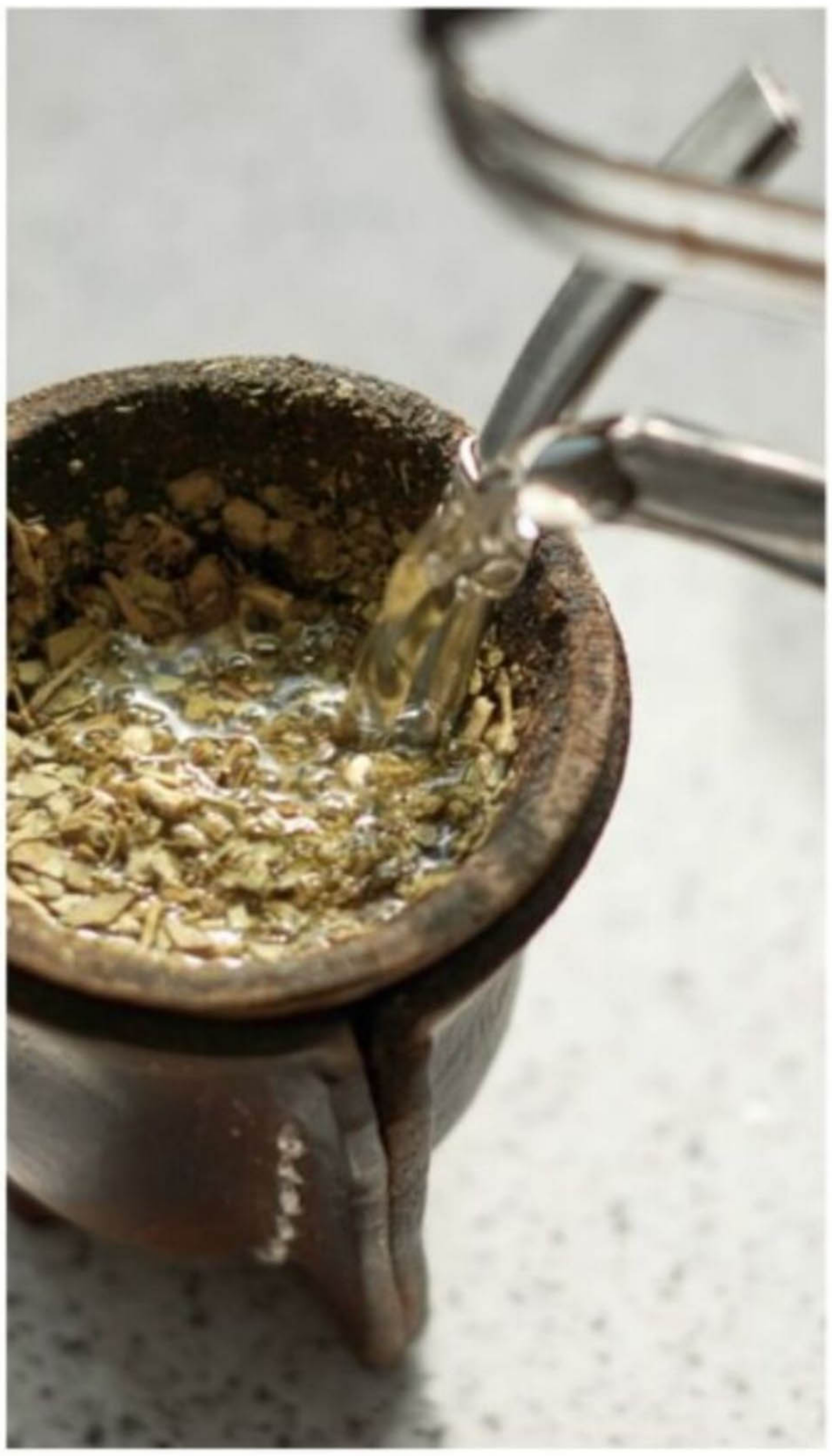
RED ALDER

Alnus rubra

A short-lived (~40 years) and fast growing tree that often comes down entirely in windstorms, providing the perfect opportunity to harvest bark. Look for smooth, gray bark with white mottling and small patches of moss and lichen, along with small cones that often linger long into winter. The dried bark may be used in decoctions and tinctures to support reduction of inflammation and pain reduction. The tincture is also useful in blends for mouthwash. *Make sure bark is fully dried as fresh bark in tea may cause nausea and vomiting.*

Erin is a community herbalist, farmer, and teacher who helps people connect with plants. She grew up on a small farm and co-owns Garden Delights Herb Farm with her mom. Erin leads plant-focused gatherings and shares plant-centered writings at plantmagicwitherin.substack.com and on social media @plantmagicwitherin





EDIBLE HOUSE PLANT

YERBA MATÉ

BY LAURELYNN G. MARTIN + BYRON E. MARTIN

Yerba maté, made from the leaves and stems of *Ilex paraguariensis*, is the beverage of choice in South America. Maté bars in South America are like North American coffee bars. Maté drinks can be ordered sweetened or unsweetened, foamed, frothed, roasted, or toasted; the choice is yours.

When it comes to growing yerba maté (also called cup herb or Paraguay tea), it is important to allow plants to become well established before harvesting too many of the leaves and stems for tea. While waiting for plants to mature, enjoy the graceful full-leafed branches, which cover themselves with tiny white flowers from winter through spring. Flowering may continue sporadically into summer.

Give yerba maté a warm, sunny spot above 60°F, with moderate amounts of fertilizer for fast growth. Once plants are established, they are vigorous growers, especially during the long days of summer. Yerba maté can fit into a variety of growing spaces. For a windowsill, you can grow it in a 6- to 8-inch pot and keep it well pruned. Or give it a 14- to 16-inch pot and allow it to become a 6- to 8-foot-tall shrub for a conservatory or sunroom.

Maté tea has all the antioxidant properties of green tea, as well as plenty of caffeine. Mature leaves and stems make the best tea. You can identify mature leaves by their texture and color. They are stiffer and darker in color than the soft light green of the young juvenile growth. Harvest mature leaves and stems at any time of the year. Put in an airy spot out of direct sunlight to dry. Arranging the stems on a dish-drying rack works well. When the leaves are dry enough to crumble easily, remove them from the stems and break or cut the stems into small pieces. Crush the stems and leaves with a mortar and pestle for a finer tea. Pour 1 cup hot, but not boiling, water over 1 tablespoon maté and steep for 5 minutes. Strain the tea and enjoy.

Plant Particulars

Size + Form 2–8 feet with pruning; shrub or tree.
Bloom Season Late winter and spring.
Fruiting Season Grown for its leaves.
Family *Aquifoliaceae*.
Origin South America.

Growing Conditions

Light Full to partial sun.
Soil Well-drained potting mix.
Minimum Indoor Temperature 50°F (10°C); can tolerate temperatures just above freezing for short periods.
Hardiness Outdoors Zone 9.

Care

Fertilizing Moderate feeders; fertilize every two weeks with a dilute balanced fertilizer. If temperatures remain above 60°F (15°C), feed year-round.
Pruning Prune when young to create a dense, multi-stemmed specimen. Once mature, prune plants periodically to curb branches that stretch out too far, to maintain size overall, and to increase shoot production.

Potential Problems

Pests Few problems.
Foliar Disease Few problems.
Root Disease Few problems.

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Laurelynn G. Martin and Byron E. Martin are co-owners of Logee's Greenhouses in Danielson, Connecticut, a business that has been in the Logee-Martin family since 1892. They are nationally recognized experts in growing tropical container plants. Find them at logees.com or on Instagram at @logeesplants

SLOWER

BY ANNA GRACE

The garden has bent her head low
At peace and unburdened
Quiet as the dark moon
Still as night
The time for creating, bearing, giving
Has drifted away with leaves on the wind
It is time for her to rest
For gentle, nourishing sleep
For roots to nestle in the fertile dark earth
Cradled in the arms of the Mother
Life remains here, hidden and humble
Beneath the blanket of snow
I cannot see it, but I can feel it
A gentle beckoning
Like the whisper of a lover

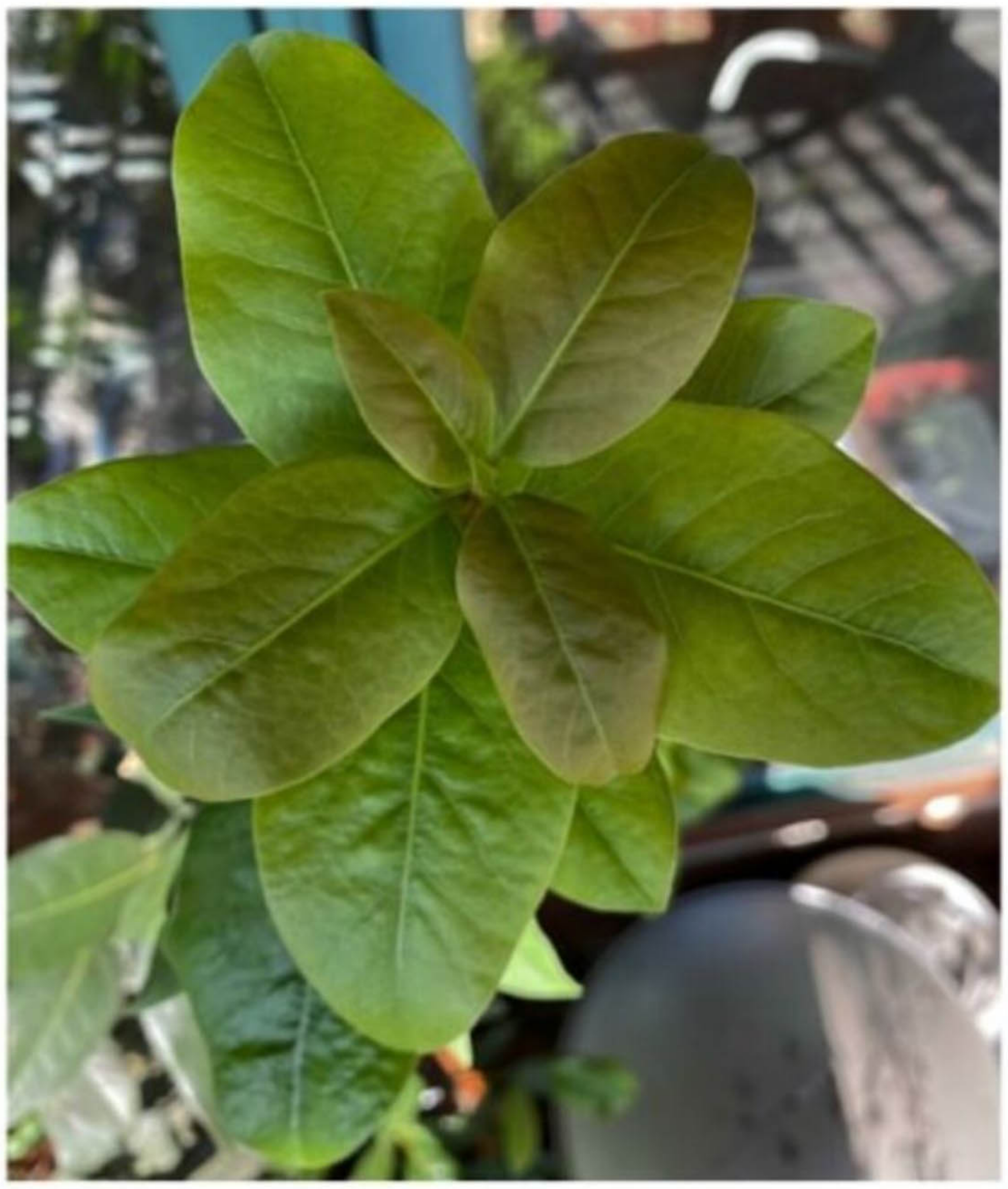
… slower
……… slower
……………… slower

Anna Grace is a poet and singer-songwriter who draws inspiration from the magic and beauty of Mother Nature. To explore Anna's creations, you can follow her on Instagram @annagrace__music and visit her website at annagracemusic.com

BAY TREES

WISDOM + STRENGTH

BY DEBORAH MANN



The essential oils and phenolic compounds that impart flavor to foods and teas are also known to have antimicrobial, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Dried or fresh leaves can be used to make a tea that helps indigestion.

Although a bay tree can reach a height of 60 feet in good conditions, it is often kept in pots and pruned as topiary. The thick, stiff, dark green leaves typically begin as slightly translucent olive-colored leaves at the top of a branch or twig. Leaves are arranged alternately up the smooth-barked trunk or branches. The ovate leaves have an acute tip and smooth edges with a well-defined midrib. If you hold a leaf up to the light you can see the distinct pattern of reticulate venation.

In the heat of a southern summer a laurel tree does well with afternoon shade, and while drought tolerant, it does appreciate regular feeding and watering. Plants grown in areas colder than USDA zone 8b need protection during the winter. In locations where winters are consistently below freezing, or experience temperature drops below 20°F, the trees need covering and possibly to be moved inside.

Crush the dark green leathery leaf of a bay tree in your hands and a wonderful, spicy perfume is released. The scent has a subtle gingery warmth to it with just a hint of a mystical spice, something like mace or nutmeg but a bit peppery. When immersed in a stew or sauce, the leaf of *Laurus nobilis* fills out the flavors of other herbs and spices, adding something indefinable to the seasonings it helps to meld.

The bay tree was originally from the Mediterranean region where it had a key place in the mythology and symbolism of the Greeks and Romans. In Greece laurel wreaths were given to victorious athletes and the most learned scholars, while in Rome successful commanders were similarly adorned. This symbolism of excellence, achievement and wisdom is continued today in the English language, captured in the word “laureate.”

Used for over a thousand years medicinally as well as in cooking, in early medicine bay oil was used to apply to joints to help rheumatism and sprains. It is now known that bay leaves are rich in vitamins A, C and B6, as well as key minerals like calcium, iron, magnesium and manganese.

Bay leaves can be harvested at any time, although the best flavors come from leaves picked on a summer morning when the oils are most prevalent. Fresh leaves can be used immediately or dried for later use. Trim or pluck the leaves from the stem, wipe with a damp cloth if dusty, and dry in a dehydrator for about 48 hours on low heat, or on the counter for about a week. Once dried, bay leaves should be stored in an airtight jar. Alternatively, fresh leaves can be kept in the fridge for up to two weeks.

Sitting next to the tree on a shaded porch on a hot afternoon, that shimmering scent drifts into the air. Later on a cold winter's night, when you add a few dried leaves to a pot of beans on the stove, that lovely aroma drifts up, bringing the warmth and memories of light into the darker season.

Bobotie

Bobotie comes from South Africa and originates with the Malay community that is largely found in Cape Town. This community began as a result of Dutch and British colonialism with free and enslaved Muslims being brought to the settlement, predominantly from Indonesia. The food of the Cape Malays is imbued with the spices of the east and has had a strong influence on South African cooking through the use of coriander, bay, cumin, turmeric and other spices.

In this dish a bay leaf can be included when cooking the meat, plus three or more leaves are traditionally placed on top of the dish for presentation as well as flavor.

Materials

1 thick slice white bread or 1 c bread crumbs
1 c milk
1 - 2 tbsp oil or butter
1 onion
1-2 garlic cloves
1 lb ground beef or lamb
1 c yellow raisins, optional
1 tbsp apricot jam
1 tbsp + 1 tsp turmeric
1 tsp cumin
1 tsp coriander
1 tsp garam masala
Salt + black pepper to taste
2 - 3 eggs
3 - 4 bay leaves

Method

Place the milk in a bowl and put the bread in the milk to soak.

Set the oven to 350°F.

In a pan on medium heat, fry the onion and garlic in the oil until soft. Add all the spices except the bay leaves and briefly fry. Add the ground meat and cook until most is brown.

Mash the bread and add the milk bread mixture to the meat mixture in the pan. Add one bay leaf, stir and let it cook together for a minute or two. Add the jam and the yellow raisins. Mix well.

Once some of the liquid has cooked off, place the meat mixture into an ovenproof dish, big enough so there is still an inch above the meat mixture.

In a bowl whisk up the eggs, you can include a splash of milk if you wish, and add the teaspoon of turmeric for color.

Pour the egg mixture over the meat in the oven proof dish. Arrange the remaining bay leaves along the top of the meat and place in the oven for about 30 minutes.

Notes

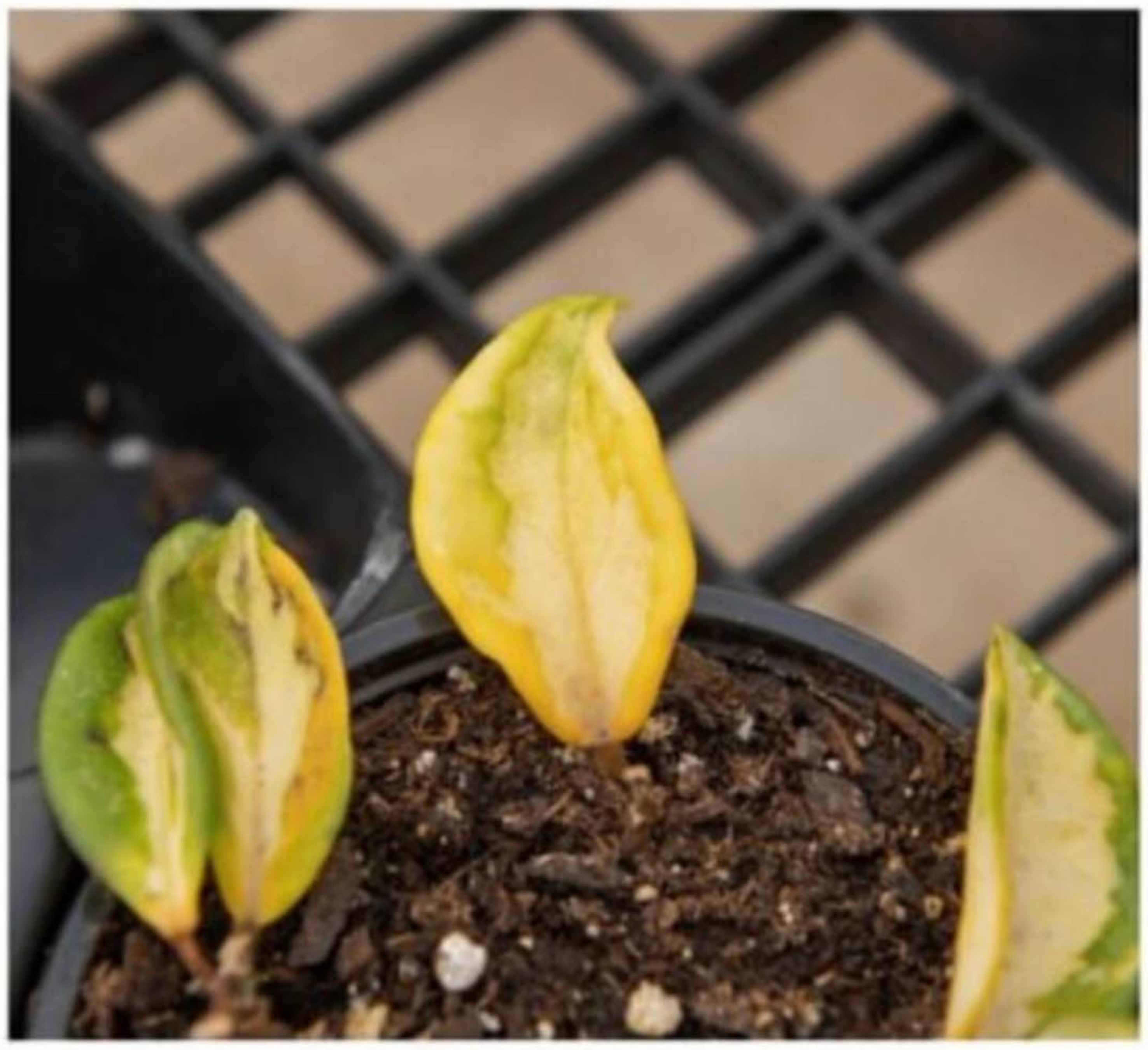
- Serve with salad and rice.
- Traditionally sambals, fruit chutney and yellow rice would be served alongside this dish.

Deborah is a botanist, gardener and teacher. Her interest in native and useful plants has spanned multiple countries and several years. She combines knowledge gained from reading and listening with observation to try to learn more about plants and the natural world around her. She intermittently blogs at botanyfordesign.com and is on social media as @long_timetraveller

COMMON ISSUES OF
HOUSE PLANTS
BY KELLYN KENNERLY

Houseplants, while generally resilient, aren't immune to challenges. As with all living things, they have specific needs, and when those aren't met, problems arise. Recognizing these issues and understanding when and how to act is crucial. Let's explore some of the most common challenges faced by houseplant lovers and provide insights on timely interventions.

Caring for houseplants isn't just about providing water and light; it's about observing, understanding and responding to their needs. By recognizing these common challenges and intervening appropriately, you can ensure your indoor jungle remains healthy, vibrant and thriving. Remember, each plant has its unique requirements. The more attuned you are to its signals, the better equipped you'll be to address any challenges that arise.



YELLOWING LEAVES

Cause Yellowing leaves often serve as a distress signal and could point to a few different issues, the most common of which are over-watering, frequent dry periods or simply aged foliage.

Intervention As with all plants, over-watering can cause root rot. This is the most common road taken to yellowed leaves. To mitigate this, provide your plant with a well-draining soil mix and be sure that you are letting the top 2 inches (5 cm) of soil dry between waterings.

In the same breath, inconsistent watering can also stress your plant, causing a similar yellowing response. Be sure you aren't watering too often or leaving a long gap in between waterings.

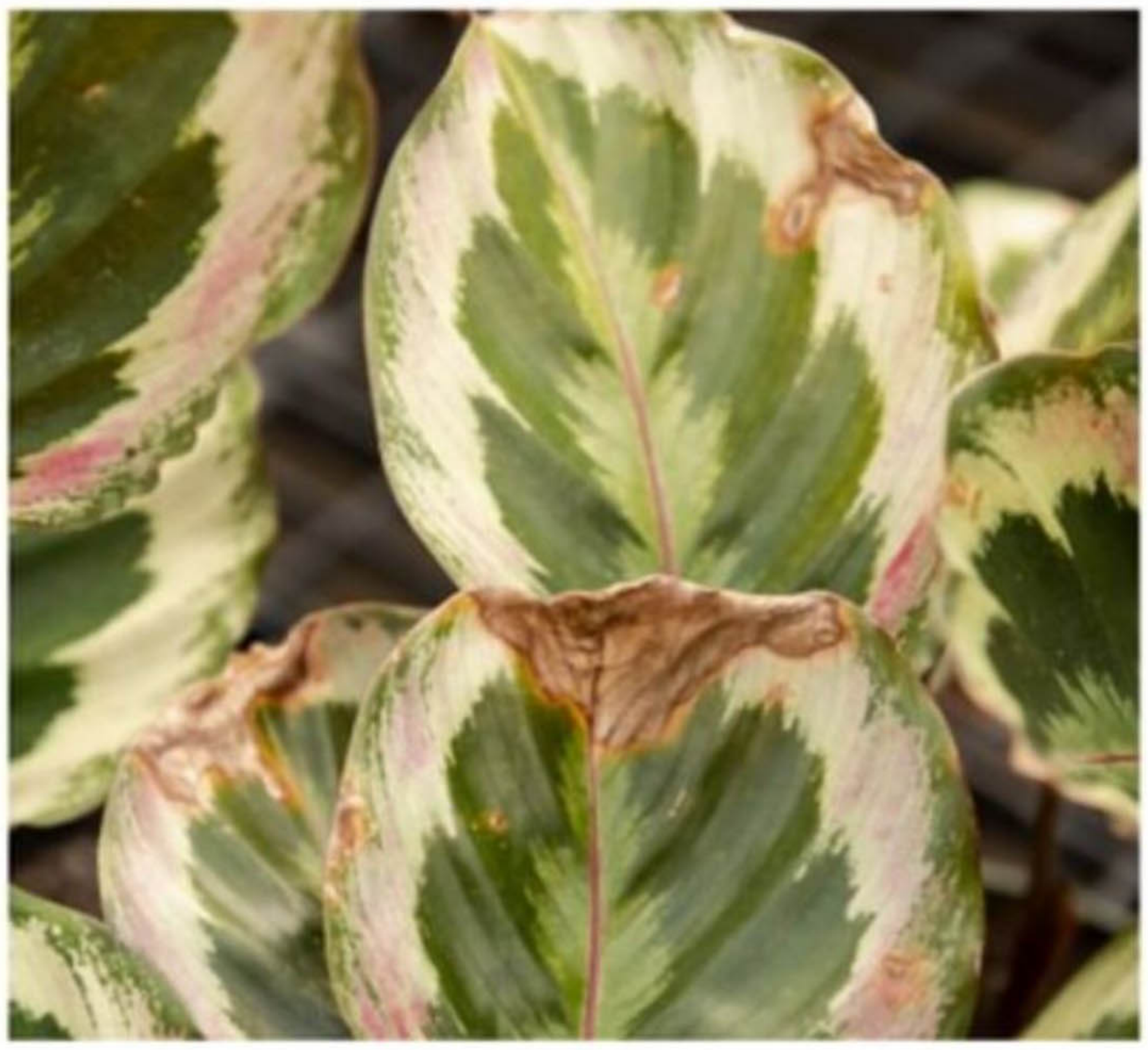
Finally, age is something neither we nor the plants can escape. Aged, yellowing leaves will typically show up at the bottom of your plant, closest to the soil. This is part of the plant life cycle and is completely normal. Trim these leaves off to redirect energy toward the healthier foliage and new emerging growth.

DROOPING OR WILTING

Cause While typically a sign of under-watering, over-watering can also be the culprit when it comes to lifeless leaves. Root rot or a pot that's too small can lead to wilting as well.

Intervention Check the soil moisture. If dry, bottom water the plant thoroughly and allow it to soak in water via top watering. Then let it sit and drain for 30 minutes. If wet, reduce watering frequency and ensure proper drainage is provided.

Repotting into a slightly larger pot with fresh soil may be necessary in some cases. You will know that it is time for a repot by observing the roots. If the roots are growing through the drainage holes, or if you observe the roots piling up on top of each other at the bottom of the pot, it is probably time to up the size of the plant's pot and provide new soil.



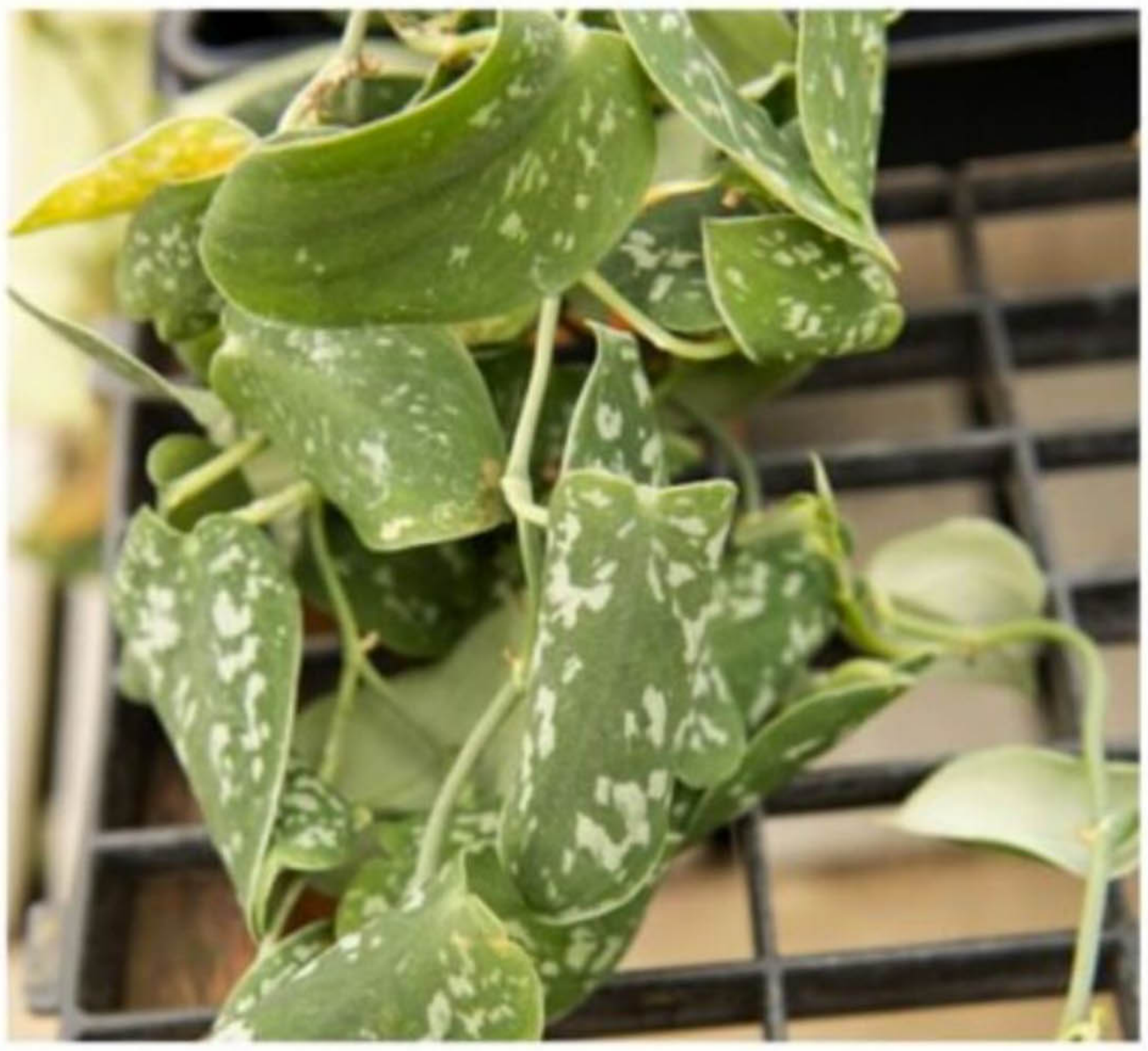
BROWN LEAF TIPS OR EDGES

Cause Brown or crispy leaf tips or edges can result from low humidity, tap water's high fluoride or chlorine content, over-fertilization or nutritional deficiencies.

Intervention Increase humidity by using a humidifier, gathering your plants very closely together or placing the plant on a tray of wet pebbles (LECA also works well for this).

If you suspect that your tap water contains a high amount of chlorine, fluoride or salts, you can use a filter before you water your plants or let the water sit out for 24 hours to allow the chlorine to evaporate and pH levels to balance. Better yet, you can also use rainwater or distilled water.

Also be sure you aren't over-(or under-) fertilizing your plants—always follow the directions on your fertilizer of choice, ensuring you aren't using too much. Keep your plant's growing season in mind; if your plant is dormant, slow your fertilization. If you haven't been fertilizing at all or haven't repotted your plant in a long time, a potassium deficiency may be causing the discoloration.



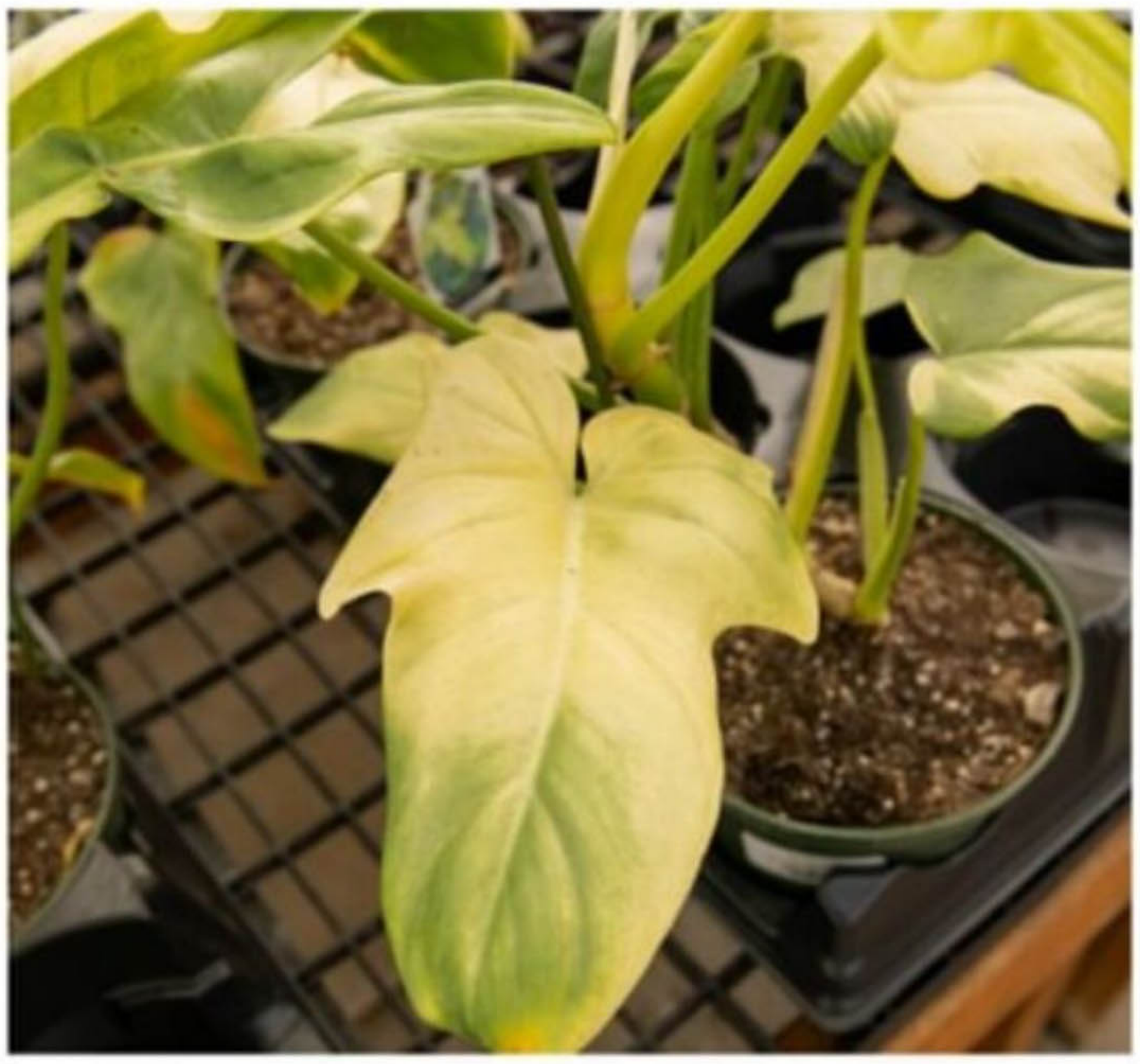
CURLING LEAVES

Cause Curling leaves on a plant can be indicative of a few different issues: underwatering, over-watering, temperature stress or even pests.

Intervention If the soil is too dry, the plant will conserve water, leading to curling leaves. Check the moisture level of the soil and adjust your watering schedule accordingly to ensure you are not under-watering. Root rot can develop if the plant is over-watered and sits in water for prolonged periods. This can cause leaves to curl and yellow. Ensure the plant has proper drainage and allow the soil to dry out slightly between waterings.

If your plant is exposed to cold drafts or sudden temperature fluctuations, the leaves might curl as a response. Try to keep your plant in a stable climate.

And lastly, foliage-loving pests such as spider mites and mealybugs will cause the leaves to curl. Pests will keep the leaves curled for an indefinite period if not treated properly. Be sure you are regularly inspecting your plant, especially the undersides of the leaves, for creepy-crawlies!



PALE FOLIAGE OR FADING COLORS

Cause Pale or fading foliage often results from insufficient light, nutrient deficiencies (especially nitrogen), over- or under-watering or pest infestations.

Intervention Relocate the plant to an area with more appropriate light for that specific variety. If natural light is limited, supplement with artificial grow lights.

Fertilize the plant with a balanced, all-purpose fertilizer that includes key nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. This will help replenish any nutrient deficiencies that might be causing the foliage to lose its vibrancy.

Adjust your watering routine to ensure the plant is neither over-watered nor under-watered. The topsoil should be allowed to dry out slightly between waterings, and the pot should have good drainage to prevent waterlogging.

Carefully inspect the plant for signs of pests. If any are found, treat the plant with an insecticide, such as insecticidal soap or neem oil. Regularly cleaning the leaves and good air circulation can help prevent pest infestations.

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Kellyn Kennerly is the creator of Easy Growing, an online platform where she spreads the joy of houseplants with her practical care guides and realistic attitude. She currently lives in Northwest Arkansas with her husband, animals and ample plant collection. Follow her on Instagram @easygrowing_ or visit easygrowing.shop

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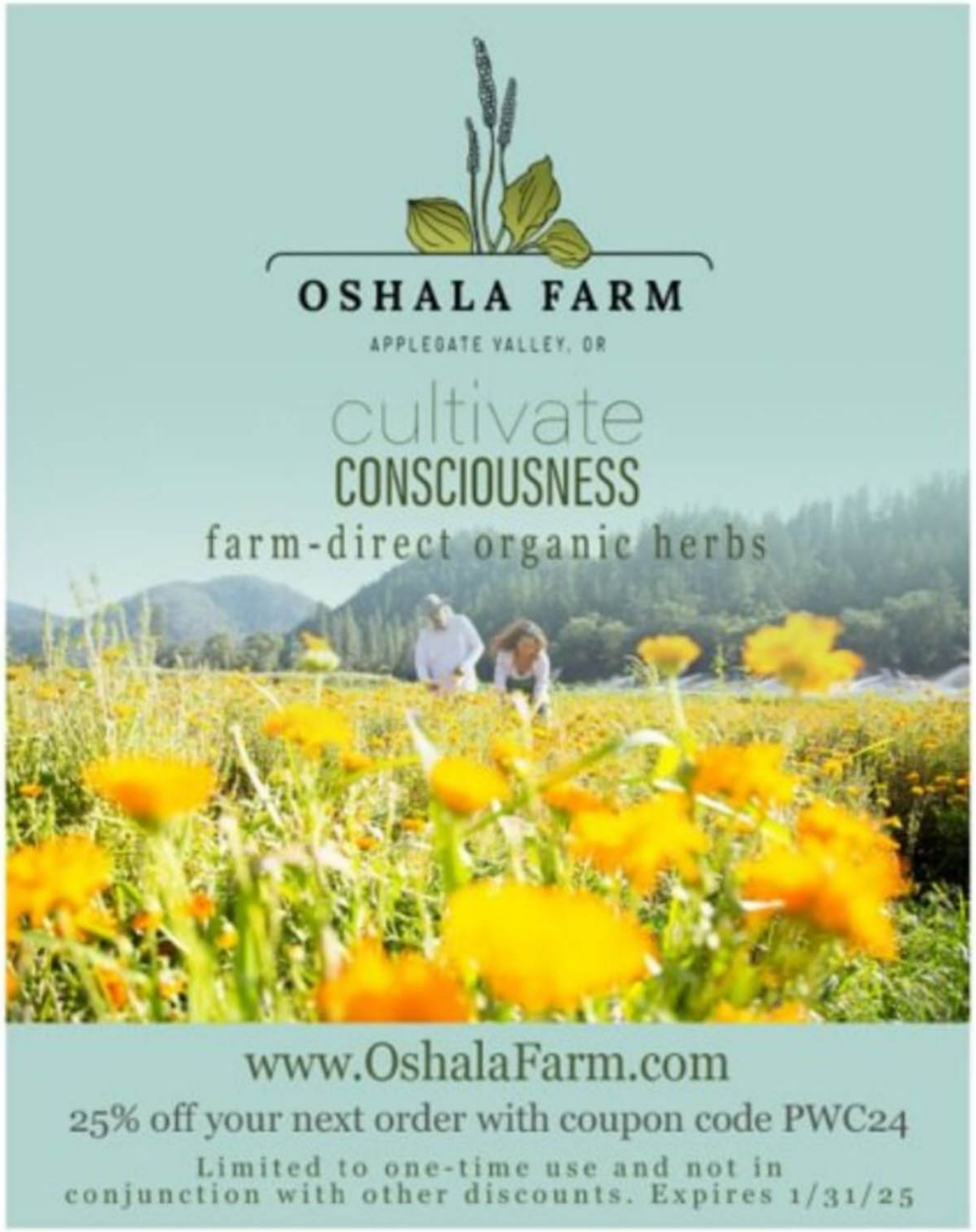

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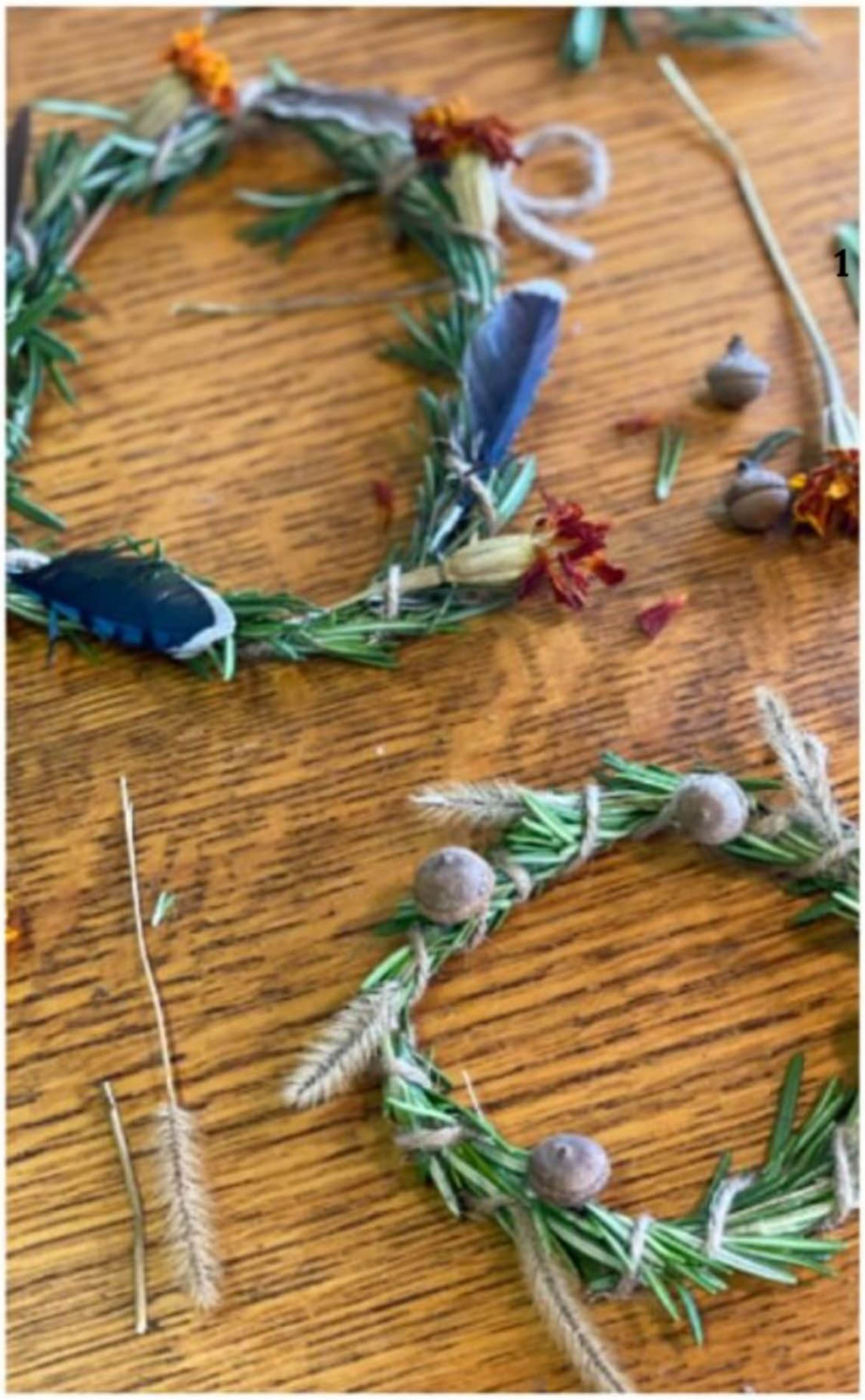
ROSEMARY
WREATHS
BY KRISTINE BROWN

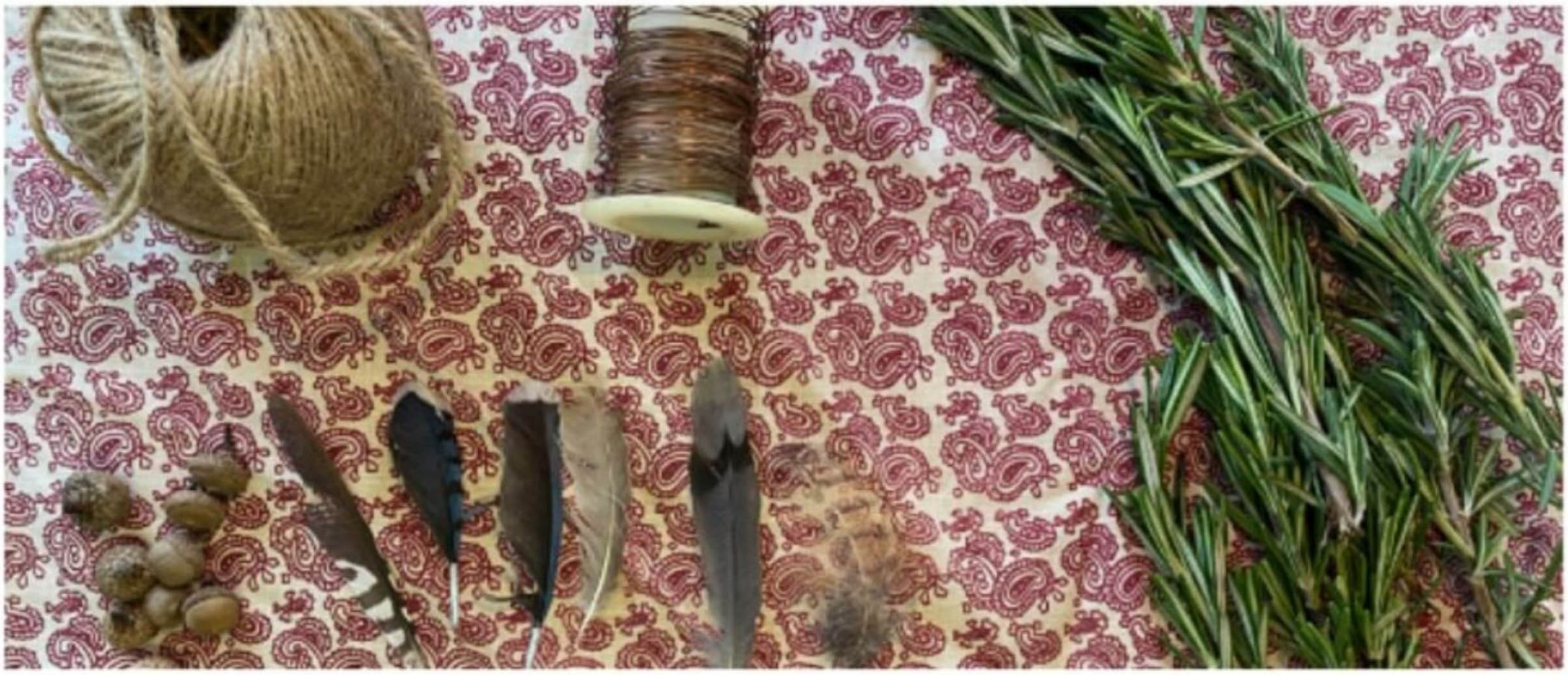


Are you looking for a fun project to do with kids to create holiday decor that doesn't require making a big mess? Rosemary wreaths are the perfect activity!

These joyful wreaths are a natural way to decorate your home for the holidays. Hang them anywhere you'd like to add a small touch of festive spirit. They are especially great in small rooms, such as a powder room or entryway where you may not have a lot of space, and add a touch of whimsy when strung on doorknobs.

While rosemary looks very similar to pine and is highly suited for this activity, wreaths could also be made with other herbs found in the produce aisle including thyme, sage, tarragon, or lavender. Herbs can be used individually or combined to make textured wreaths.

Use collected nature finds from throughout the year, such as pinecones, shells, dried cranberries, feathers, and acorns to adorn your wreaths or add miniature jingle bells. Once the holiday season has passed, they can be tossed on a fire or added to a pot of simmering water to release their fragrance into the air. Be sure to remove any decorations and hot glue before using.



Materials

Sprigs of fresh rosemary
Decorative objects
Hemp twine, ribbon or string
Thin wire or hot glue gun

Method

1. Lay 2-4 sprigs together on the table. Take 2-4 more sprigs and lay their natural ends on top of the cut ends of the first two, overlapping about an inch. The more sprigs you use, the fatter the wreath will be. If you'd like a bigger wreath, use 4 sprigs and add more sections of sprigs until you reach the desired size.

2. Using the twine or ribbon, tie around the section with both sprigs tightly, securing with a knot in the back.

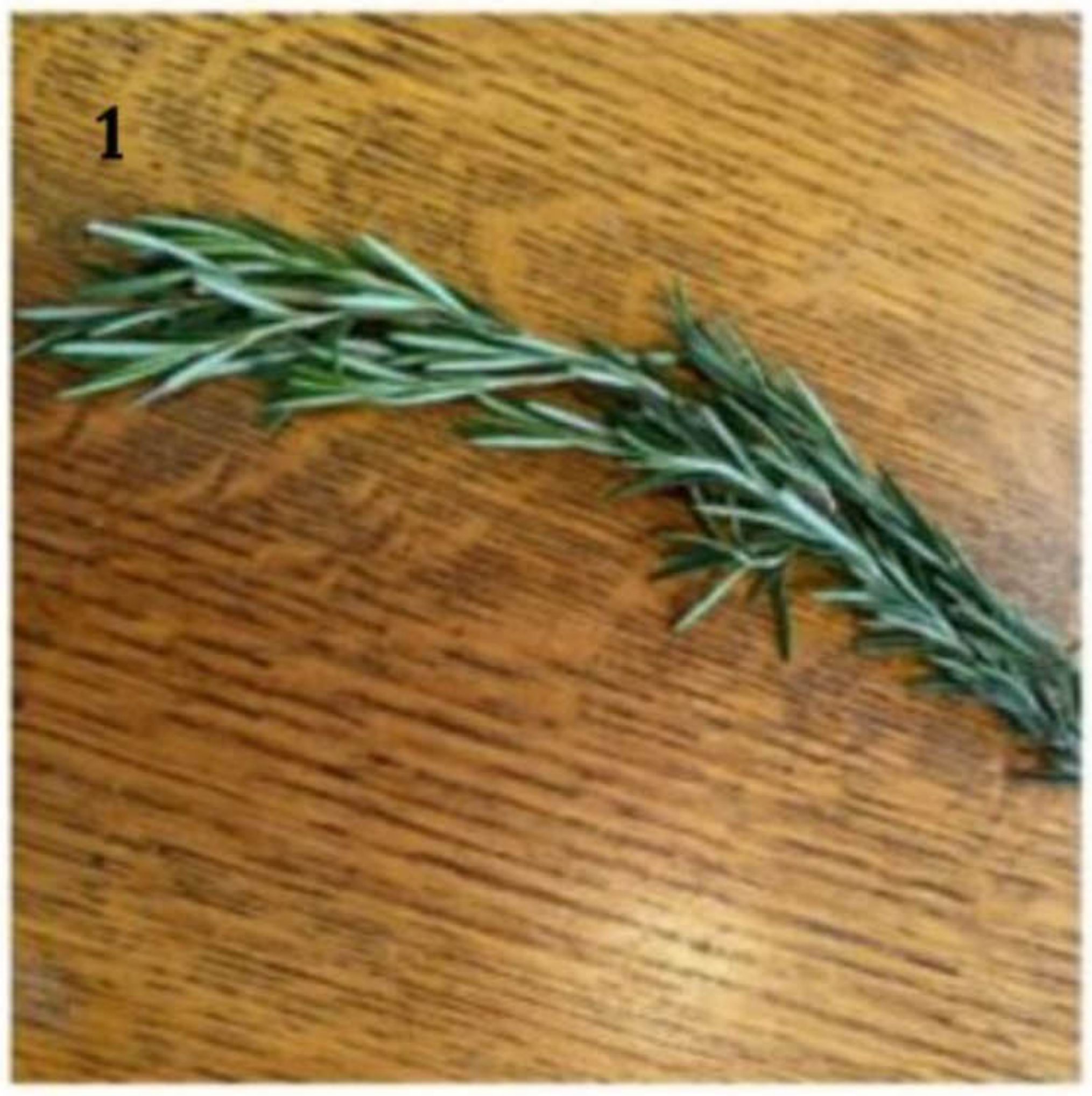
3. Wrap the twine around the rosemary in a clockwise direction in wide sections. When you come to the end of the sprigs, curve them around to meet the ends of the other two sprigs to form a circle and continue looping the twine until you get back to the beginning.

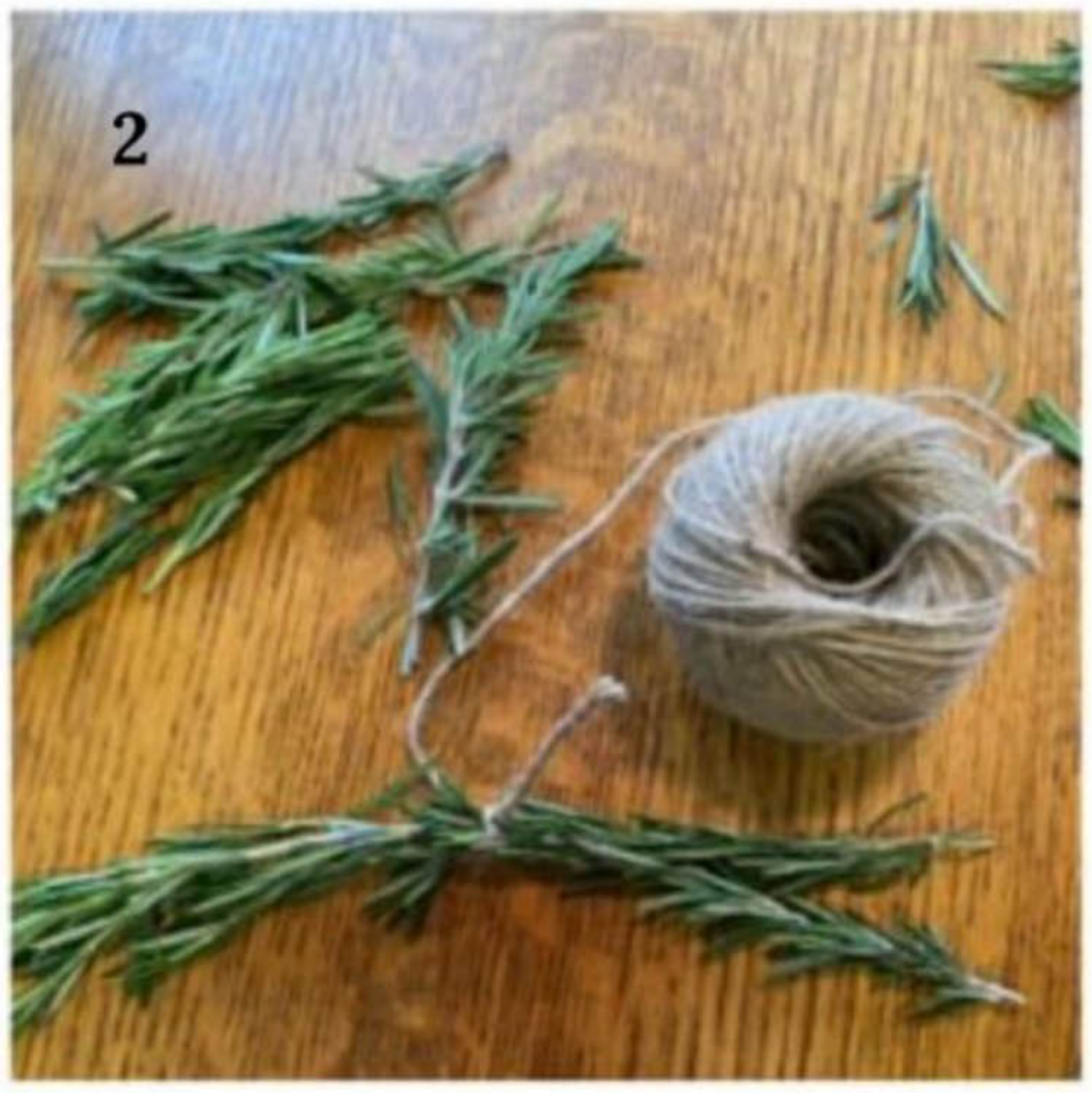
4. Cut the twine, leaving a 4 inch tail. Tie the twine off in the back and then loop and tie again to form a hanger.

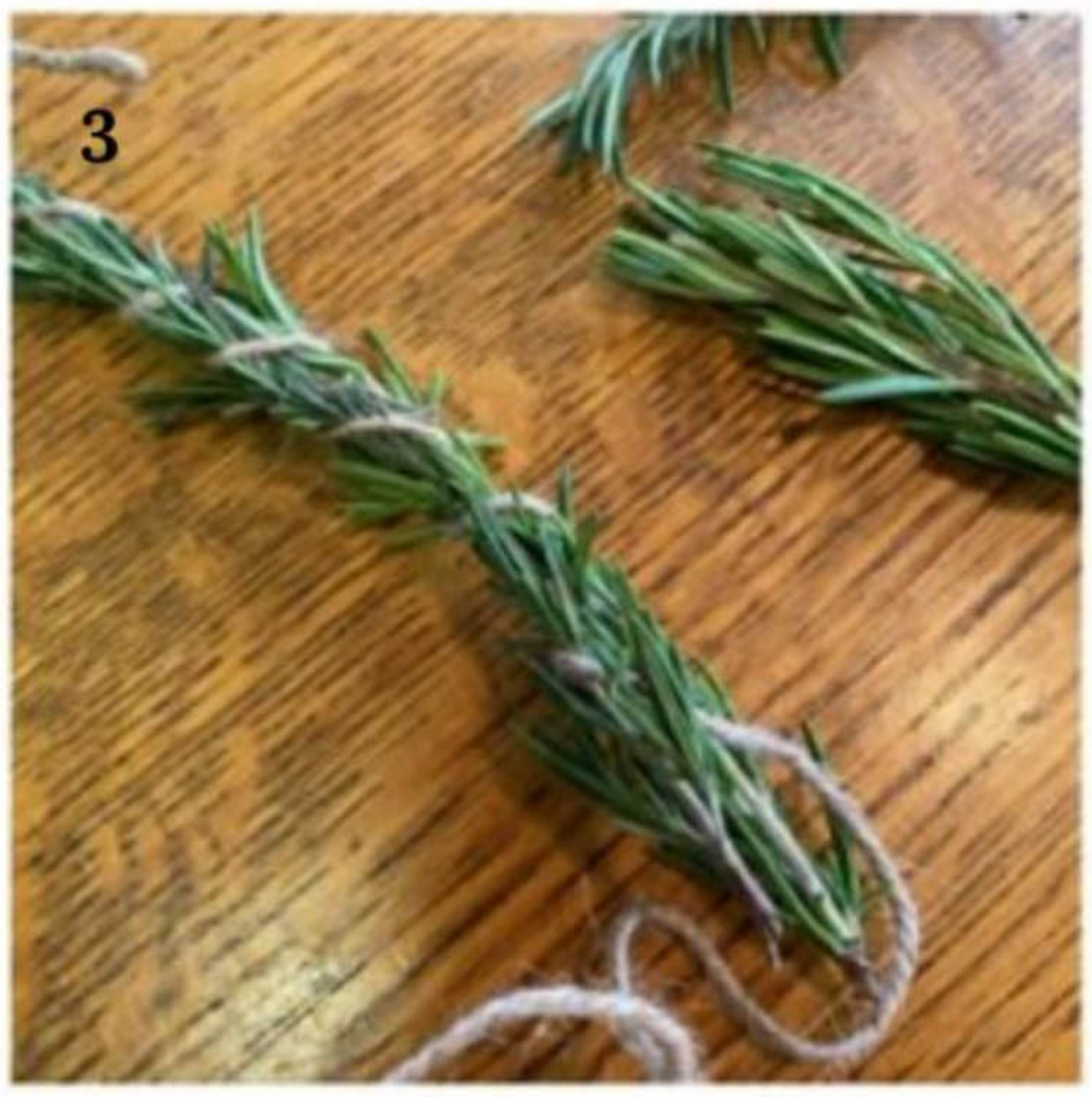
5. Using thin wire or the hot glue gun, add pine cones, shells, dried berries, feathers and other decorative objects.

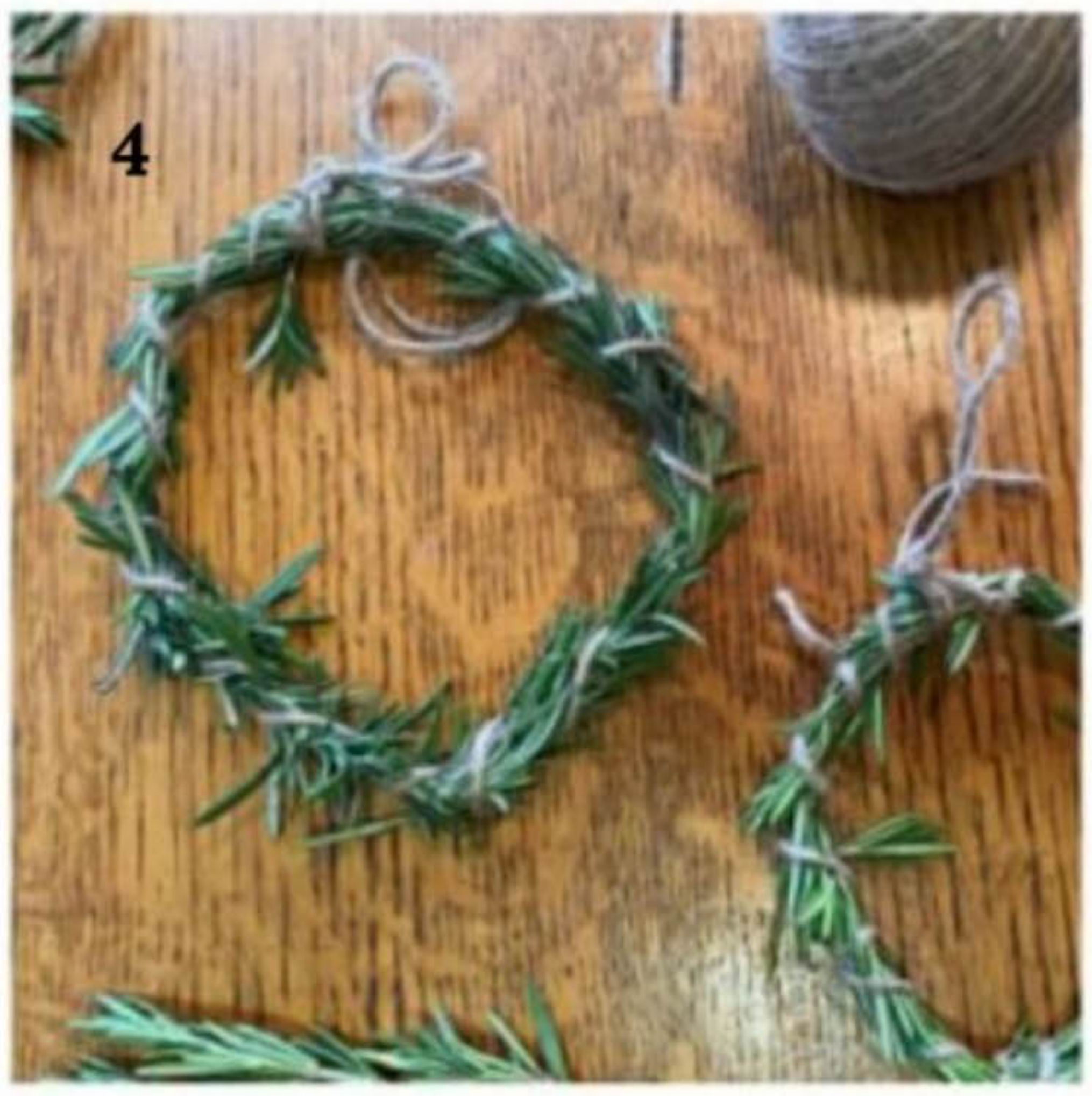
6. Hang on doorknobs or anywhere you'd like to add a lovely scented festivity to your home.

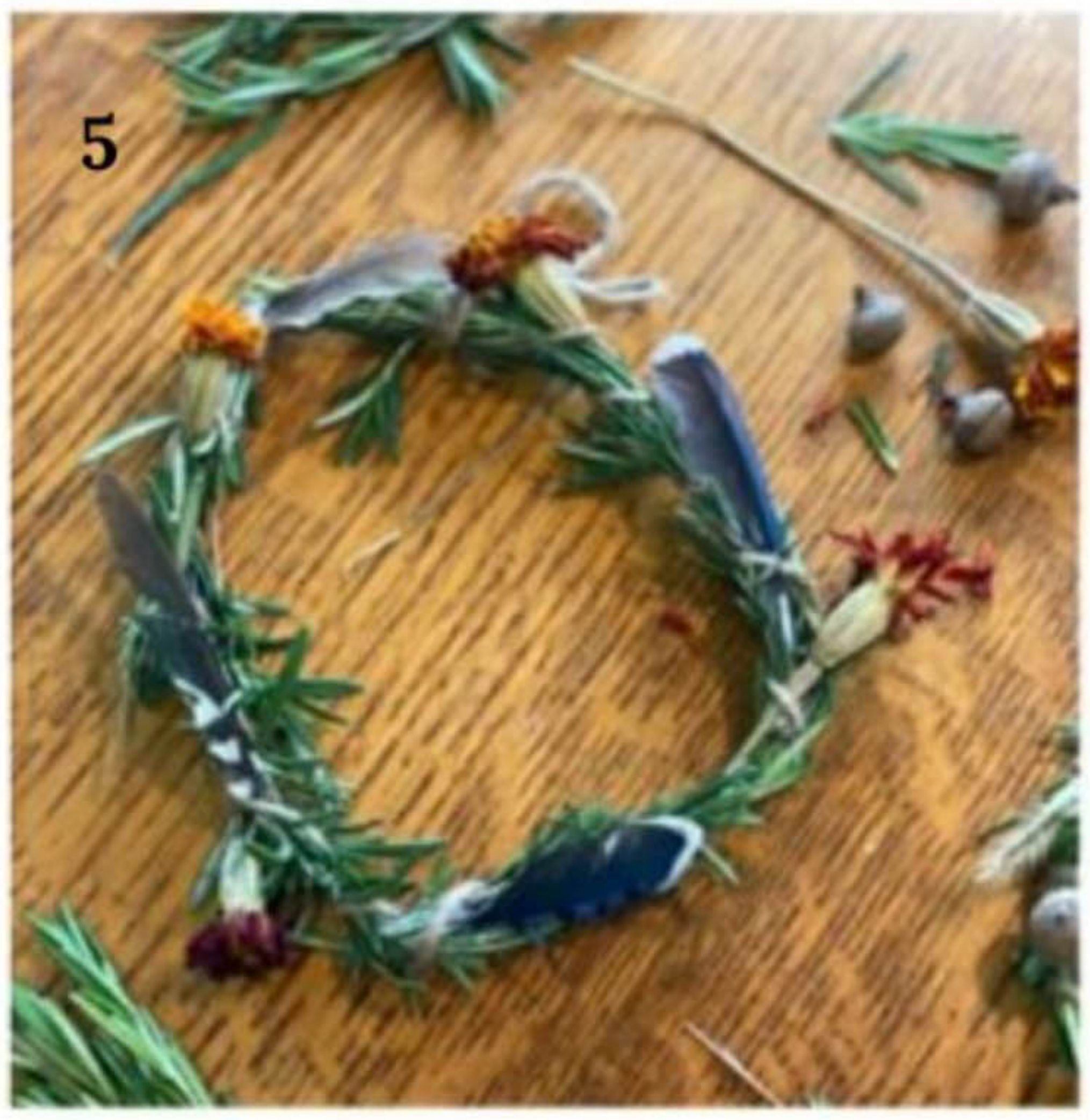
Kristine Brown, RH (AHG) is the writer and illustrator of the children's publication Herbal Roots zine, which includes ebooks, online courses, and a membership offering, Herb Club. She is the author of Herbalism at Home, The Homesteader's Guide to Growing Herbs, and Nature Anatomy Activities for Kids and Nature Anatomy Guided Journal for Kids. Find her online at herbalrootszine.com and on social media @herbalrootszine

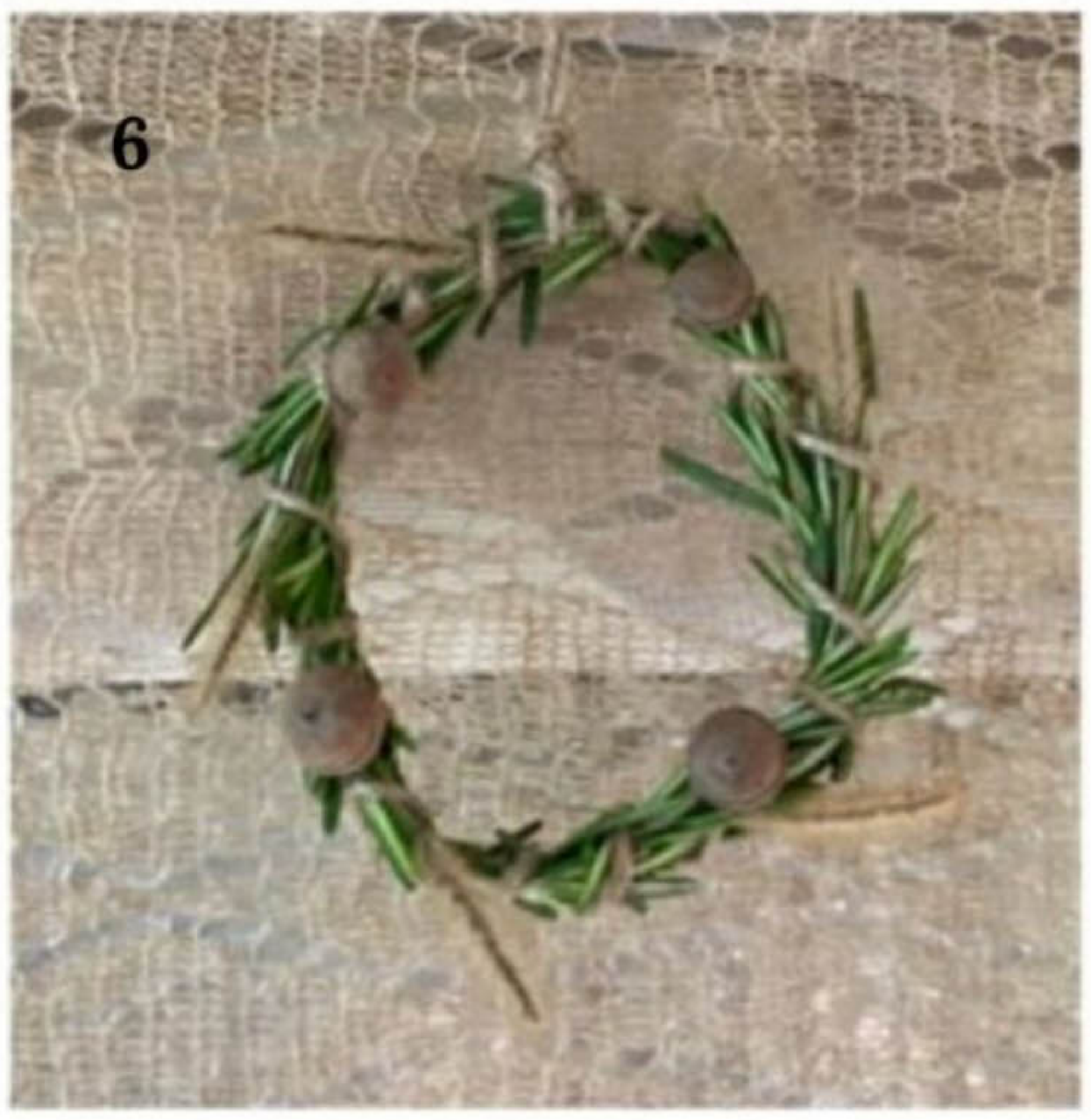












INTENTIONAL GIFTING WITH BLOCK PRINTING

BY KASEY LAWSON

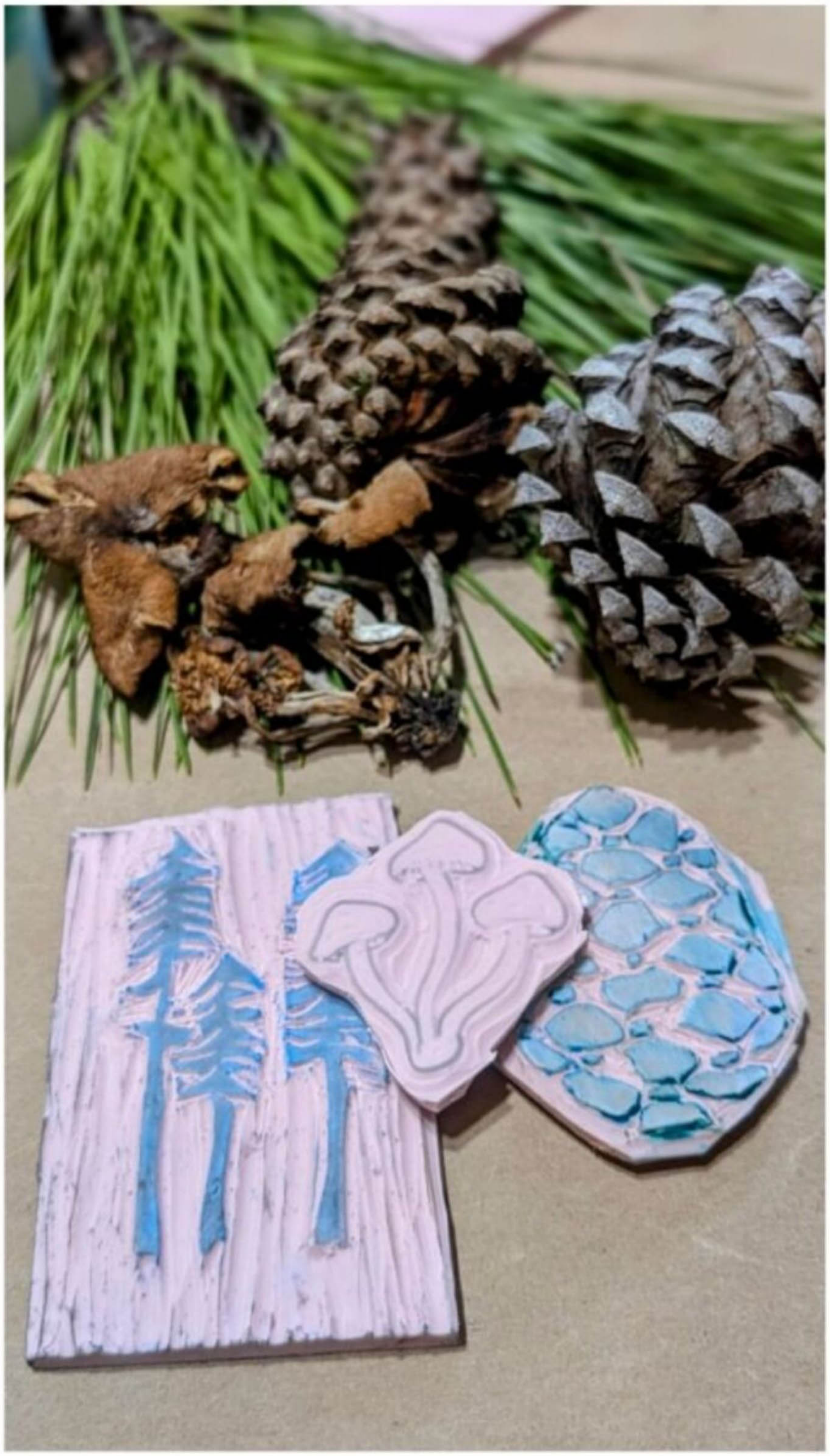
Winter brings to mind many things: coziness, cold, longer nights, turning inward, rest. Along with the temperature change, winter sparks opportunities for connection—longer periods of rest breed creativity as productivity slows.

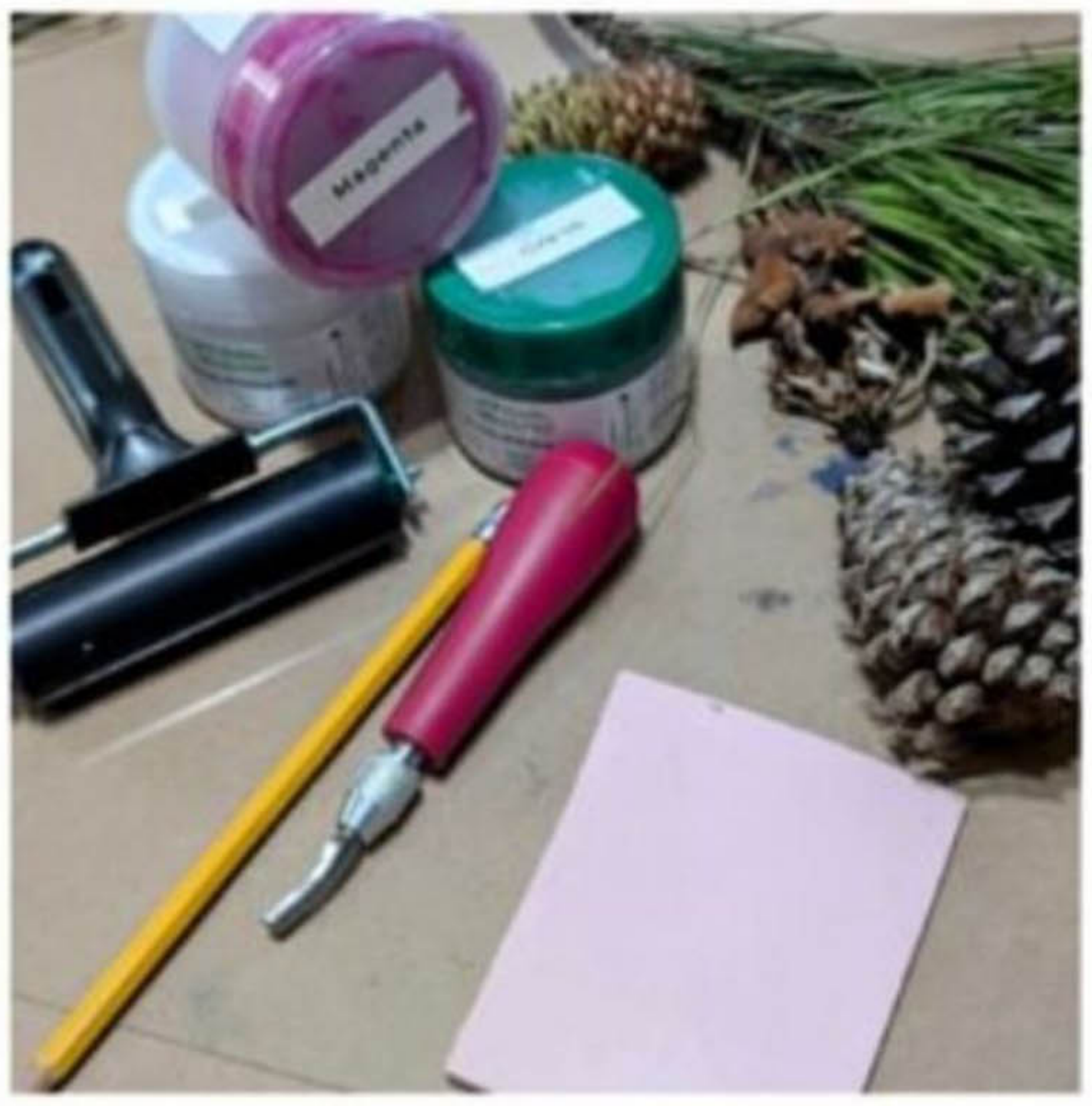
The act of engaging in art is often an exercise in mindfulness. It starts with an end goal in mind, maybe a painting, a collage, or a block print. Materials are gathered mindfully, considering what's needed and what could enhance the project. Then the magic happens: creation. Creativity often encourages full immersion into a project, mind focused, hands busy, hearts open to receive the next brilliant idea.

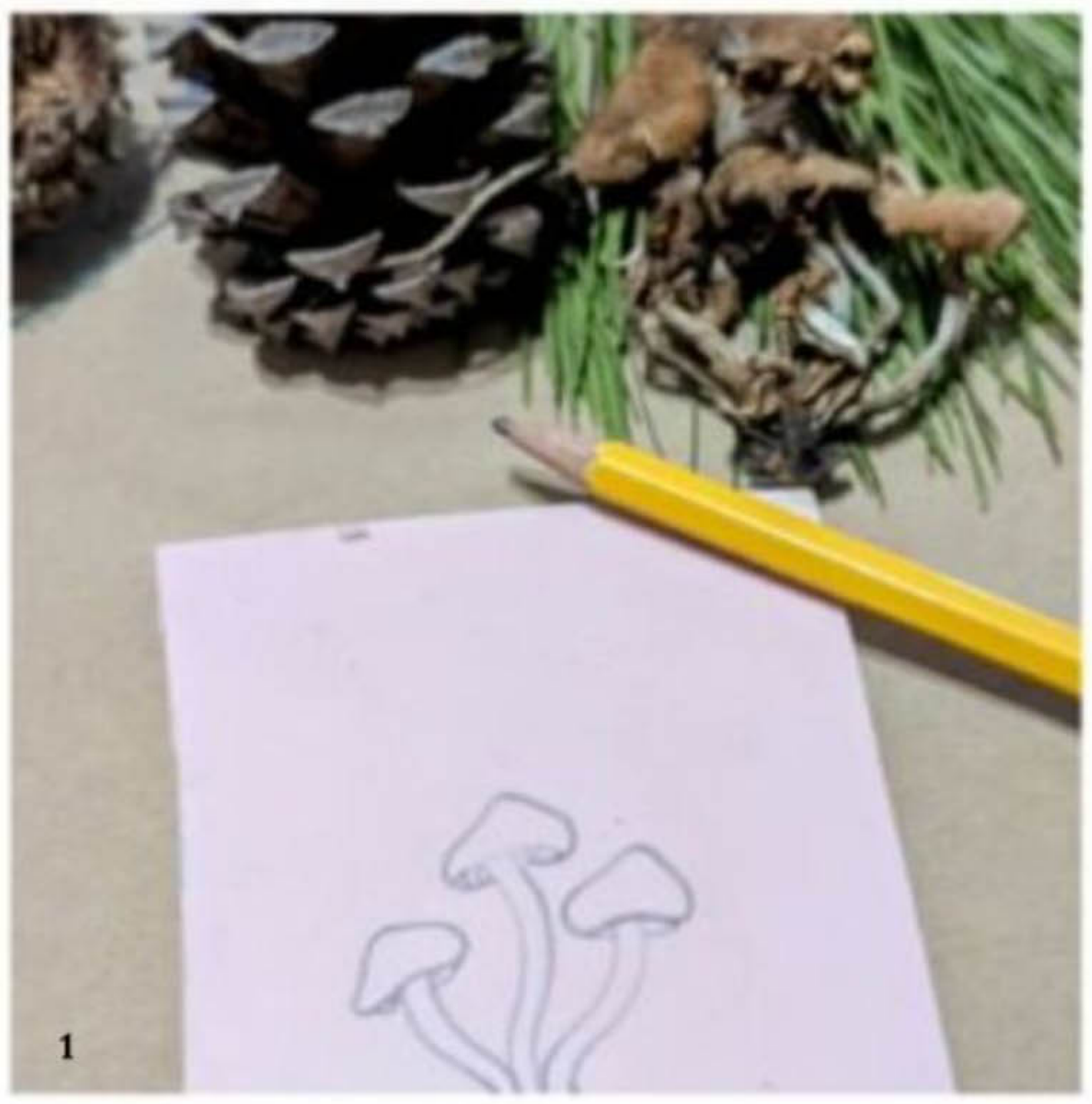
The seasonal shift offers numerous opportunities for generosity, from family gatherings, parties, holidays, gift exchanges with friends. When creativity is combined with the act, a great opportunity for intentional gifting emerges. One way to cultivate this opportunity is through crafting block print wrapping paper.

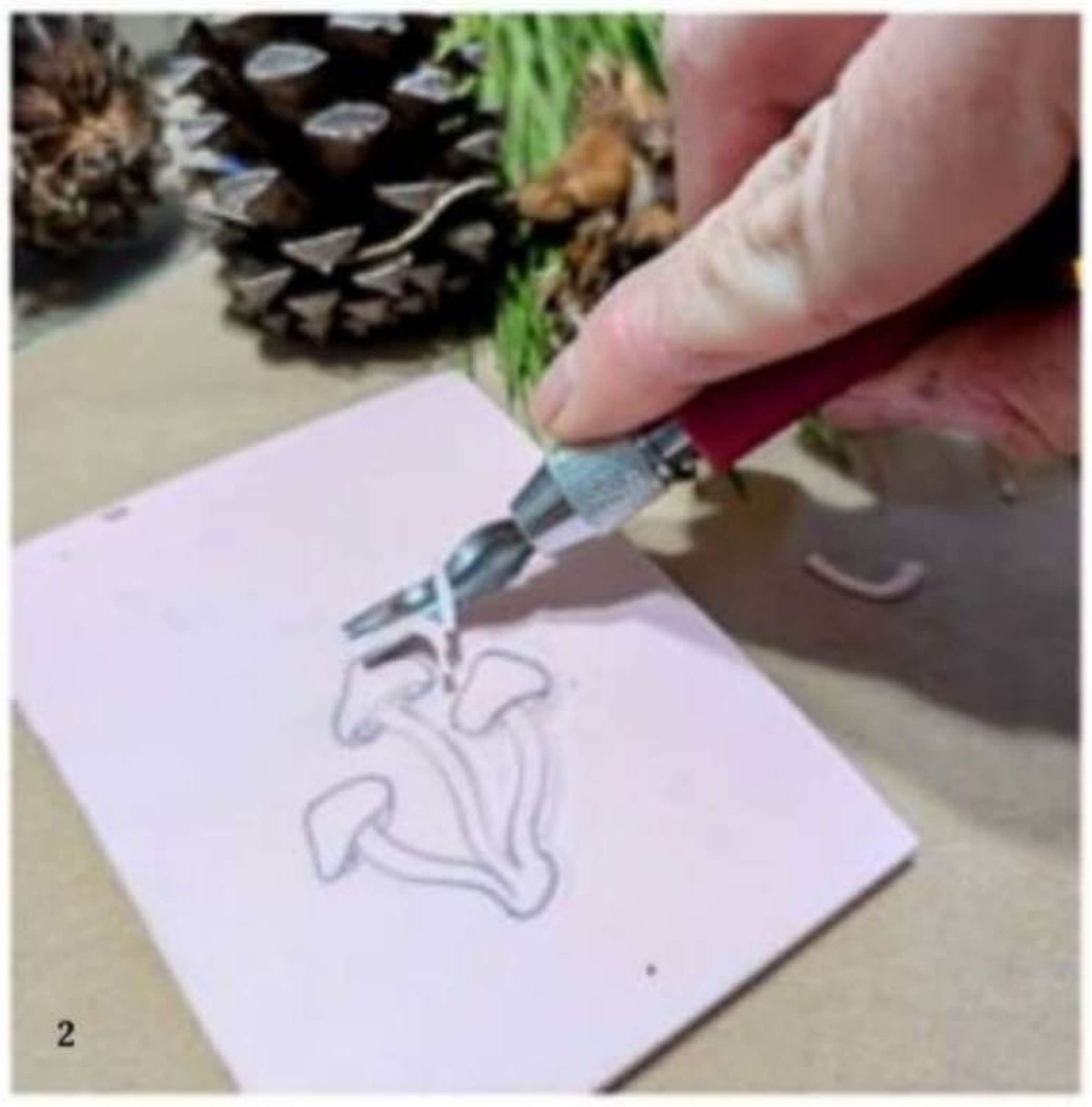
Block printing is the act of carving away what you don't want, to leave behind what you'd like to print. It's the act of viewing negative space as part of the whole and crafting a design that incorporates both. Simply put, block printing involves carving a block—it can be rubber, linoleum, or wood—and using ink to print the result. This simple process can render whimsical offerings perfect for winter energy.

To craft block prints, first take a walk through the winter forest or woodland areas to gather inspiration and materials. Fallen pine branches, lichens, acorns, mushrooms, pinecones are all options. Notice where attention settles and start there. This collection will be used to stimulate imagination and even become imprints on the paper, too. Perhaps pine prints next to a carved pinecone and mushrooms, or the interesting pattern a lichen makes when pressed to ink and then paper. Wherever that inner creativity glimmer alights—start there. The finished product will bring originality and intention to your gift giving.









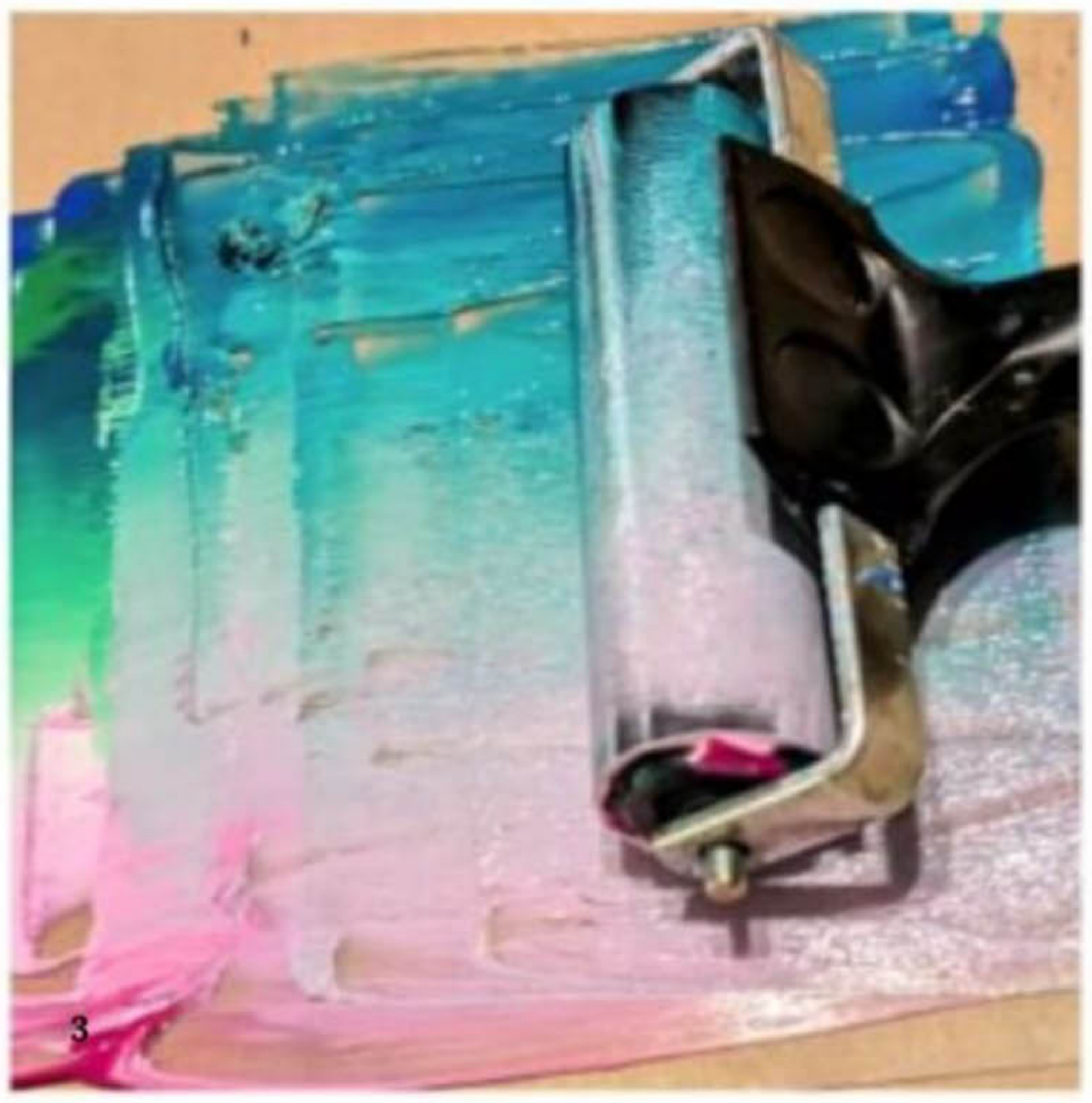
Materials

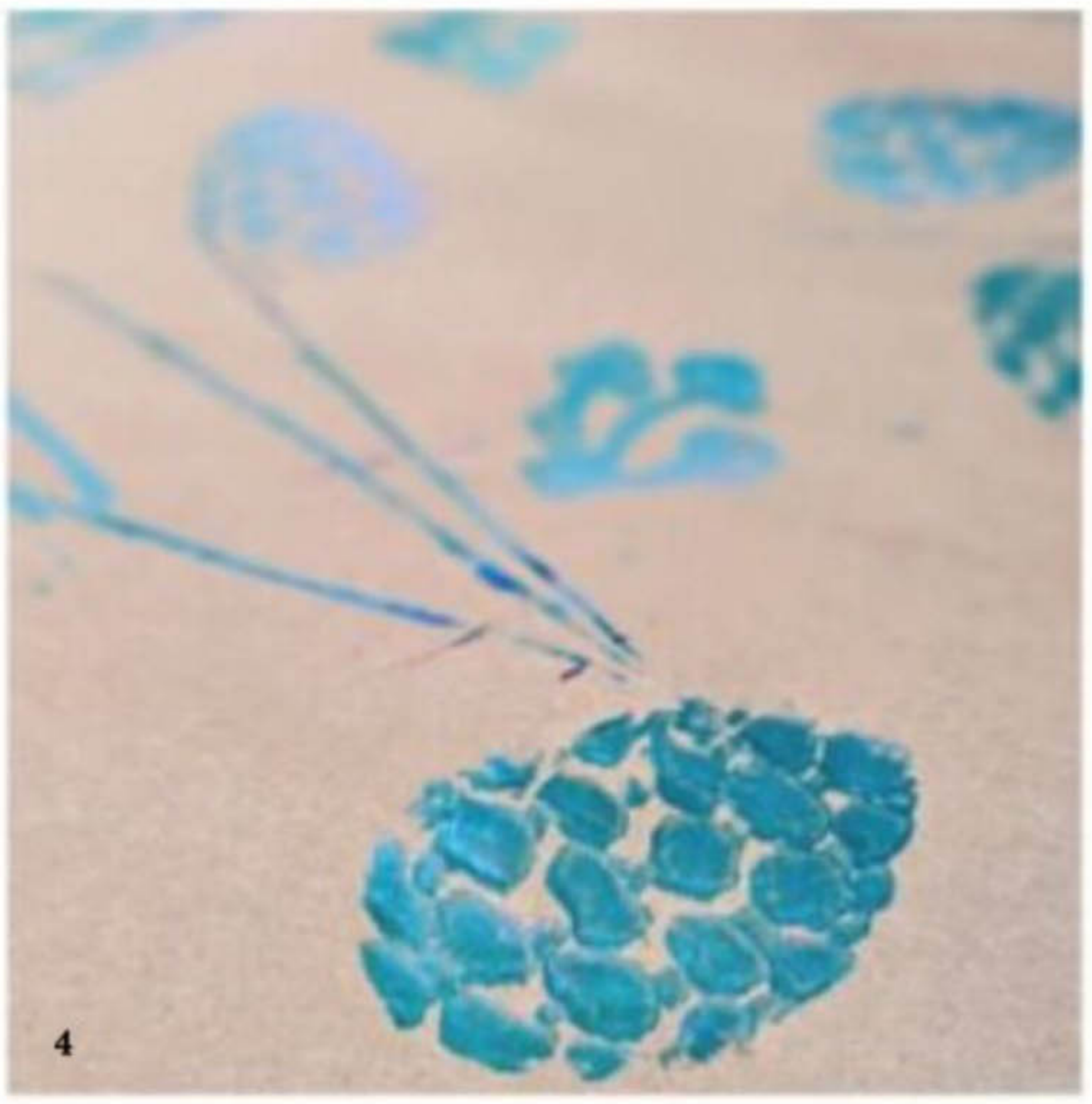
Rubber carving block
Carving tools
Nature materials
Printing plate
Roller
Brown kraft paper
Water soluble block print ink

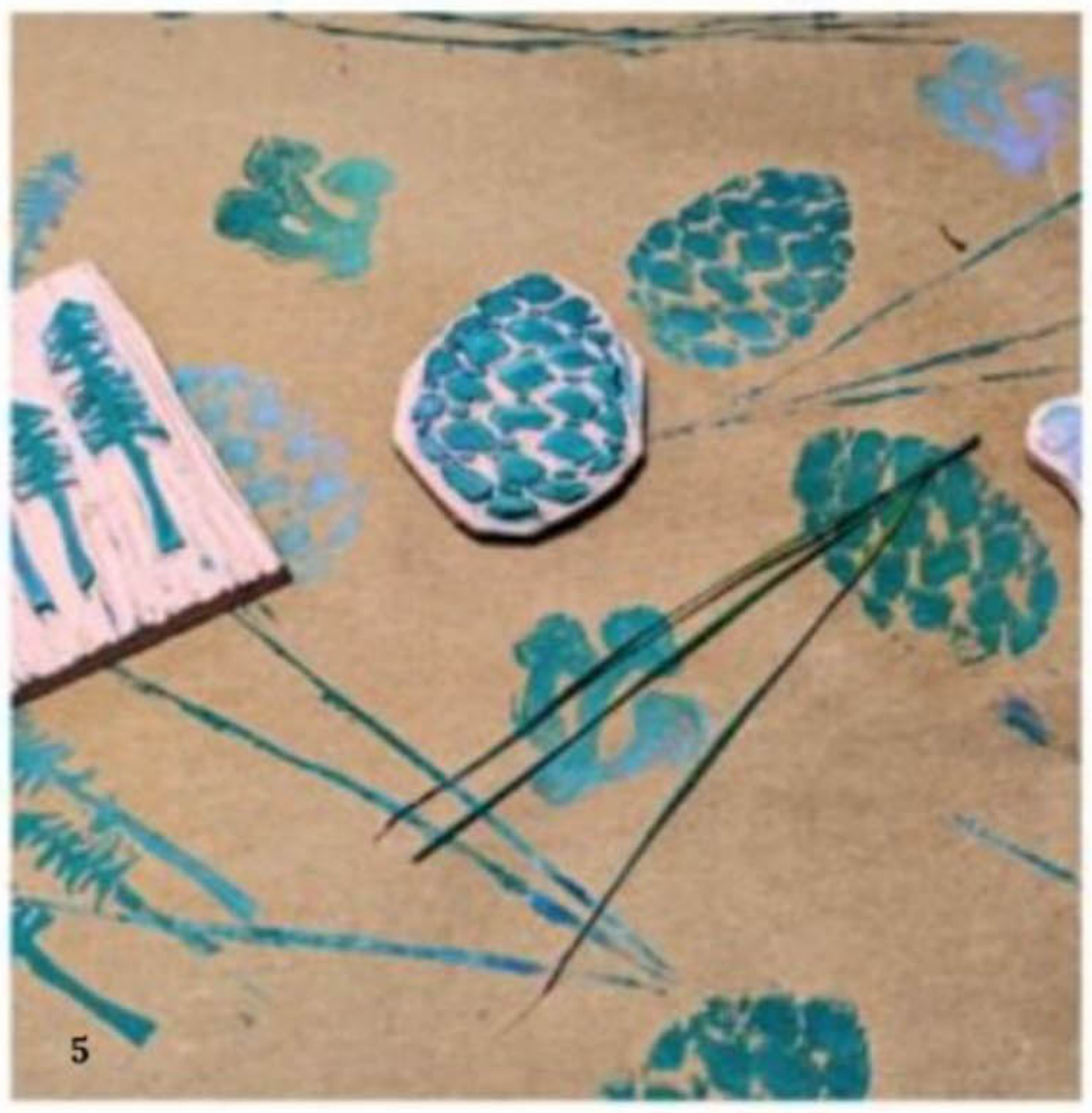
Method

1. Using nature materials for inspiration, draw the design directly into a rubber block. Use a Sharpie to color in areas that won't be carved. This step is optional but helps bring clarity to the carving process.

2. Use the carving tool to carve around the outside of the design. The finest tip works well. Be sure to push the carving tool away from your body in a scooping motion. Use a wider tip to carve away larger areas on the block until all that's left is the printable surface. Test the print with a stamp pad or small amount of ink to determine if any refinement is necessary.







3. Spread a small amount of ink onto the printing plate. Roll the ink with the brayer until it's thin and tacky, making a sticking sound when it's rolled. Roll the ink onto the stamp surface, making sure to roll from several directions to ensure good coverage.

4. Press the stamp onto the paper, using a printing baren or the back of a wooden spoon to apply even pressure. Carefully remove the stamp and repeat in a pleasing pattern to create a wrapping paper print.

5. Roll the ink onto a printing plate. Carefully lay botanicals onto the ink. Use the brayer to roll ink over them, making sure to achieve full coverage. Intentionally position botanicals onto the paper, using a pair of tweezers. Use a scrap piece of paper to cover them, pressing down evenly to imprint onto the paper surface. Remove the paper and botanicals.

Kasey is a homeschool mom, artist, crafter and herbalist viewing the world through a lens of magical moments and slowing down. You can find her on Instagram at @WanderWildCollective

CINNAMON SALT DOUGH GINGERBREAD CANDLE HOLDERS

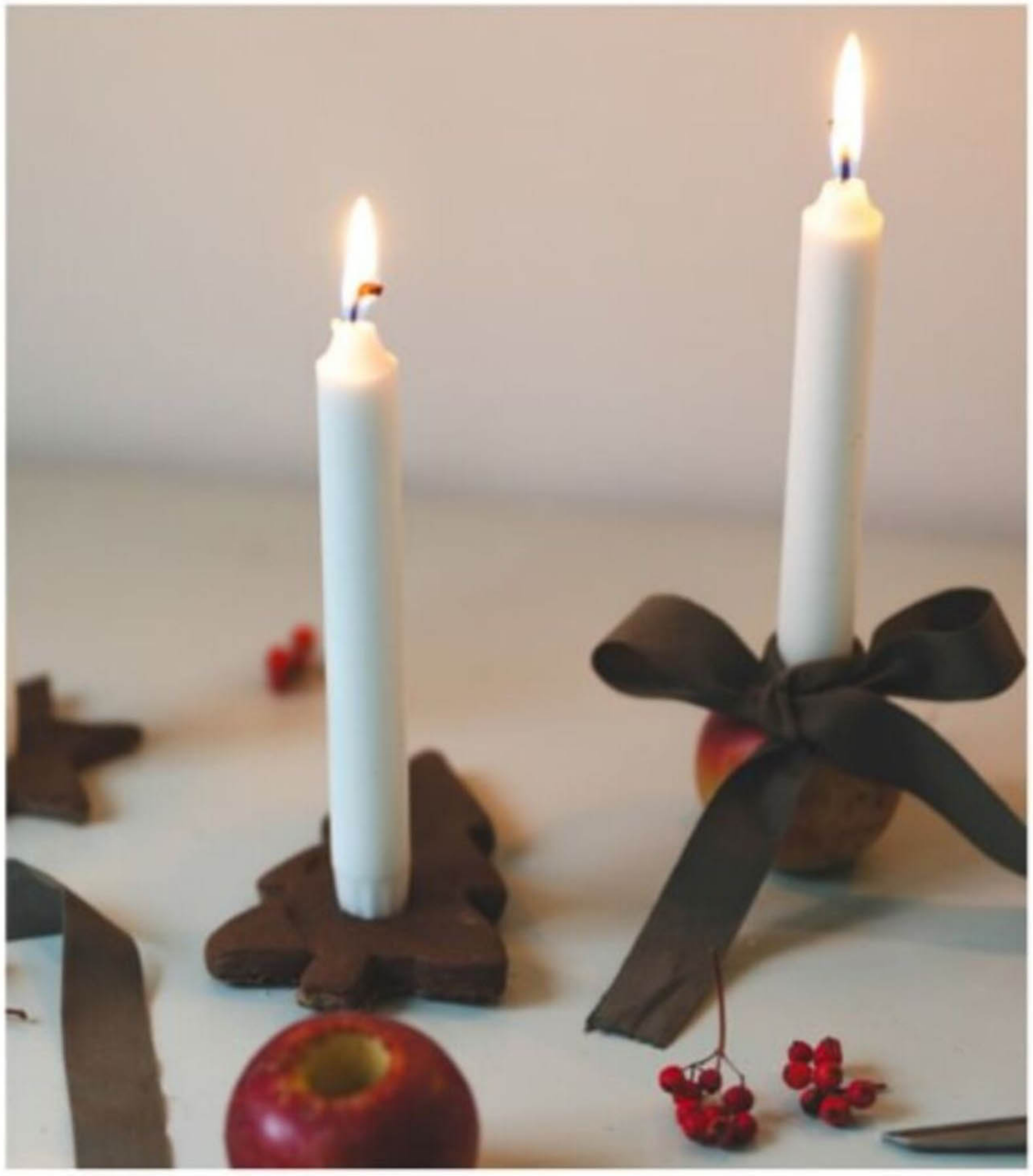
BY GINA VIDE

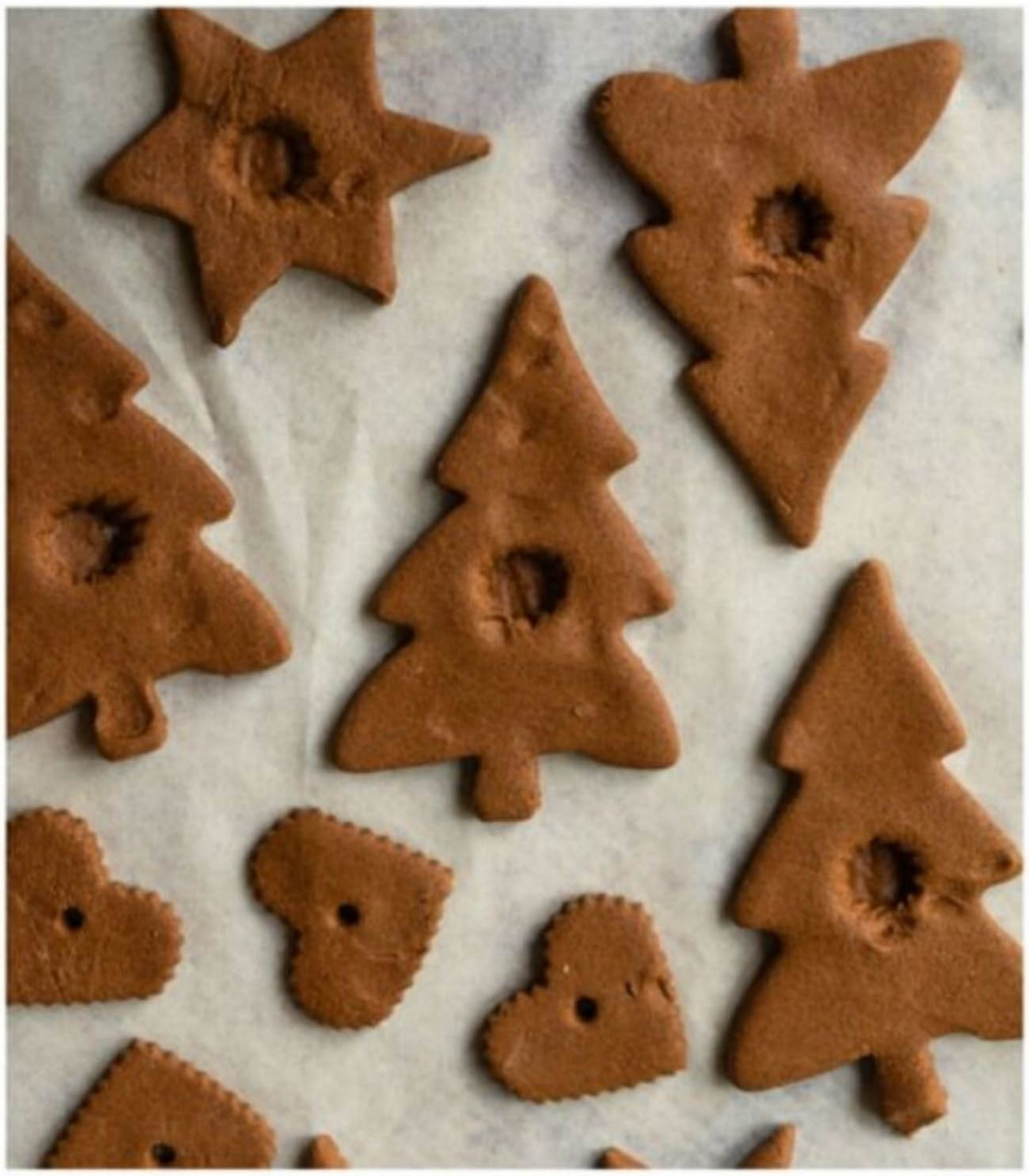
Cinnamon has long been synonymous with Swedish holiday traditions, particularly in baked goods like gingerbread cookies or *pepparkakor* and cinnamon buns. *Pepparkakor* has been enjoyed in Sweden since the 1300s, originally reserved for the upper class due to the high cost of spices like cinnamon and cloves. The spices most commonly used before the introduction of cinnamon were black pepper, ginger, saffron, nutmeg, mace and cloves. By the 19th century, these festive cookies became more common, and today, they are a staple of Christmas celebrations, often used to decorate trees or served alongside mulled wine or glögg.

The journey of cinnamon to Sweden traces back to the spice trade between the 15th and 17th centuries. It came from Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, reaching Europe through trade routes controlled first by Venice and later by the Portuguese. The Swedish East India Company, established in 1731, was key to bringing cinnamon and other exotic spices to Sweden, which helped cement its role in Swedish cuisine.

Cinnamon is not just flavorful; it also has a number of herbal benefits. Its antimicrobial and antifungal properties can help preserve air-dry projects like those made with gingerbread salt dough by preventing mold and bacteria growth. Additionally, the warm, comforting aroma of cinnamon acts as a natural air freshener taking inspiration from the aromatic gingerbread cookie.

Young and old can set imaginations loose creating cinnamon gingerbread candle holders or ornaments. It is not only a fun and festive activity, but also a way to fill your home with the nostalgic scent of the holidays while tapping into cinnamon's practical qualities.





Materials

3 c flour
1 c cinnamon
1 c salt
1 ½ - 2 c water
1-2 tbsp vegetable oil, optional
Beads, buttons, puffy paint, string or ribbon

Method

Mix flour, cinnamon, and salt, gradually adding water until the dough is firm but not sticky. Add oil if you would like a smoother dough.

To make candle holders, press the base of a candle firmly into the dough to create the base. If you would like to make ornaments, shape them and make a hole for hanging using a straw.

Air dry for a day or bake in the oven at 200°F for 2 hours.

To restore the rich gingerbread color, dab a bit of vegetable oil on the surface once dry.

Leave plain or decorate using puffy paint, beads, or other materials, and let dry before hanging with string or ribbon.

Gina Vide (Vee-dah, Swedish for "willow"), a BFA-trained artist and international designer, creates petal-based artwork inspired by nature. Living in Sweden with her family, she founded the award-winning Willowday blog. Gina follows her curiosity through creative projects, writing, travel, and time with family. willowday.com | @willowdaygram

SIMMER POT
GIFT JARS
BY KRISTINA ZUFALL

If a picture is worth a thousand words, how many more words is a scent worth? The winter season is defined by holiday festivities, spending time with loved ones and gift-giving. Simmer pot gift jars are a surefire way to conjure up nostalgic memories and bring festive cheer to gatherings. While simple in the way of materials, the presentation will be sure to impress.

Simmer pots are a way to perfume your home by warming fruits, herbs and spices on a low simmer on the stovetop or in an electric slow cooker as an alternative to harsh, artificial fragrances. They are virtually limitless in their combinations and are a sustainable way to utilize produce a little worse for wear, floral arrangements that have started to wilt, or the abundance of herbs from the garden.

These gift jars use citrus and apple to bring an initial pop of fragrance and color to the simmer pot. Cinnamon and clove bring the familiar coziness of the season. Star anise contributes its festive shape to the jar's presentation. Rosemary and sage lend their familiar and festive scents in a powerful, lasting manner. Finally, evergreen's aroma brings the unmistakable mark of the festive season.

Dehydrating the fruit and any herbs before creating your gift means gift jars can be made well in advance and ensures the longevity of the fruit for the recipient. Substituting with what fruits you have on hand is a great way to customize this gift too; pears, cranberries, and even kiwi can be great additions. Thrift stores are a great place to source fabric and jars for this project. Consider using other elements you have such as pine cones and pine needles, juniper cuttings, or even holiday tree trimmings as additions or adornments to your jar.

As a gift, simmer pot jars are an excellent way to spread a little holiday cheer without breaking the bank. They also give the recipient something that can be put to immediate use.

Materials (per jar)

1 large or 2 small citrus fruits
1 medium red apple
2 cinnamon sticks
5 star anise pods
1 tbsp cloves
2 small rosemary sprigs
1 small sage sprig
2 small evergreen sprigs such as cedar, pine, or fir
1 16-oz mason jar
5" square decorative fabric or enough to cover jar lid
Twine
Cardstock for tag

Download Gift Tag

Method

Begin by dehydrating your citrus and apple by cutting into thin slices. Cut across midpoint to create a visually appealing cross section. Lay the slices on a parchment-lined baking sheet and place into the oven at its lowest temperature, around 200°F. Turn slices each hour until all moisture is gone. It can take 2 hours for small, thinly sliced items, and up to 4 hours for thicker, larger slices. Ensure slices are cool to touch before proceeding.

Prepare your jar by adding citrus slices, apple slices, cinnamon sticks, star anise pods, cloves, rosemary, and sage in a visually appealing arrangement.

To seal, layer the metal topper to the jar, then fabric square and finally the ring around the jar.

Print and cut tag with instructions for recipient, punch hole, and tie to jar with twine.

Kristina is a lifelong creative that garners inspiration from the nature around her. On her homestead in Central Texas, you will find her tending to her garden and pecan orchard, creating foraged floral arrangements, and interacting with her many animal rescues. She shares all of her nature-inspired adventures and more on Instagram @thefeatheredjournal

WINTRY

WAX SEAL

BY WILLOW AND SAGE

Wax seals evoke an era when beautiful touches adorned even the most common aspects of life. This holiday season, top off a gift with an elegant wax seal and a simple sprig of greenery. When you don't have the supplies for a true wax seal, you can achieve the same look with hot glue.

It's a simple project that truly elevates your packages and makes the recipient feel loved. A fun task to work on while watching a nostalgic favorite holiday movie or sipping a cup of hot chocolate, first venture outdoors to harvest pine, cedar or fir for a winter family outing.

Materials

Brown paper
Twine
Sprig of greenery
Hot glue
Rubber stamp
Metallic acrylic paint
Paintbrush

Method

Wrap the gift with brown paper, tie with twine, and secure a sprig of greenery.

Apply 8–10 pumps of hot glue to the gift, let it sit for 90 seconds, gently press a rubber stamp into the glue, leave the stamp in place for two minutes, and slowly remove.

Apply metallic acrylic paint to the seal for that extra elegance.

Willow and Sage magazine is filled with all-natural recipes for homemade bath and body products. From natural bath salts and soaps, to sugar scrubs and essential oil blends, each issue provides hand-illustrated infographics, educational information, inspiration for creative packaging, and homemade gift ideas for any occasion. To learn more, visit willowandsage.com

Folklore

Myth + Magic + Ritual

Maria Ilves

WINTER ZODIAC

FULL MOON TEAS

BY ANNA REISZ

The cycle of the year draws toward winter once more, whose full moons beckon us to reflect, protect, and rest. In the midst of merry and bright celebrations, which rally our spirits to face the cold and dark ahead, we also find quiet moments to look at all that has passed in the year behind and to look ahead to the road ahead us in the coming year. The full moons of this season can help shine a light on the path beneath our feet in the present moment.

Celebrating these astronomical rhythms by marking them with ritual, reverence, and meditation can help us pause and refresh as we realign our perspectives for the next moon cycle. Connecting with plants that have synergy with each of the winter full moons' energies, and the corresponding astrological sign of the cycle, can help ground us into these rhythms.

Brew and drink teas tailored to each lunation for this connection. You might sip a cup while journaling about your hopes and dreams for the year ahead or meditating on a winter night under the full moon.

THE MOON
GEMEAUX
CANCER

BREWING FULL MOON TEA

For all the following tea recipes, use these brewing instructions. All the recipes are for brewing one cup of tea.

Method
To make a single cup of tea, add 1 tablespoon to a tea strainer, eco-friendly tea bag, or French press. Pour 1 to 1 ½ cups hot water over the tea and steep for about 5 minutes. Strain, and serve. Add sweetener of choice to taste, if desired.

Notes

- To cold-brew teas, add the ingredients to a glass jar or French press and steep overnight in the refrigerator.
- To imbue extra intention, follow the cold-brew method but set the jar outdoors or in a windowsill to steep overnight beneath the light of the moon.
- In recipes including fibrous, tough roots and/or seeds, the brewing time may be extended to extract more medicinal benefits from the plant matter if desired.
- In recipes calling for fruit, fresh or dried can be used interchangeably, as needed or desired.
- Full moon teas can be used as a base for a hot toddy or as mulling spices in cider as an alternative way to enjoy.

DECEMBER: COLD MOON IN GEMINI 12/15/24

December's Cold Moon coincides with the dwindling sunlight and longest nights of the year. This full moon brings with it a sense of receding into stillness, shadow work, and reflection, despite the festive activities which we engage in to fill our cups with light and warmth. Combined with the influence of Gemini, which presides over this year's Cold Moon, it is a time to soften the heart and open up to change while sharing wholeheartedly and authentically with loved ones.

Gemini helps find warmth in this endeavor to bolster your spirit. Plants to aid in this softening include Earl Grey tea with bergamot's tender influence, juniper berries for protective boundaries, fennel for a cool head, and lavender for harmony.

Cold Moon in Gemini Tea Materials
1 tsp loose-leaf Earl Grey tea
1 tsp juniper berries
½ tsp fennel seed
½ tsp lavender

JANUARY: WOLF MOON IN CANCER 1/13/25

The Wolf Moon of January harkens to the scarcity of winter and the need to rely on the support and cooperation of the pack during the bleak cold. This cycle's connection to familial and homely ties is strengthened by the sign of Cancer. Protection from the winter's cold might well be a priority, but safety and strength can also be derived from emotional connection with those in your "pack."

Cancer urges you to be open and fluid to the possibility of whiling away the winter hours deepening emotional ties with loved ones. Lean on heart-tending herbs such as rose hips and cinnamon, pine for protection, and jasmine for emotional balance.

Wolf Moon in Cancer Tea Materials
1 tsp rose hips
½ tsp pine needles
½ tsp cinnamon chips
½ tsp jasmine

FEBRUARY: SNOW MOON IN LEO 2/12/25

February's Snow Moon brings with it the light at the end of the tunnel, when we see hope as the season continues to run its course. Still, we temper that optimism with the need to be mindfully present as we still endure more snow and cold before the winter's end can arrive. Leo rules the Snow Moon this year and fuels our brightened spirits with fire and a continuation of the communal shift we have been experiencing throughout the winter moons.

Leo bids us to harness our fire and energy to lead, aid, and shine a light for those around us even while the Snow Moon and the presiding sun sign of Aquarius remind us to see clearly what is before us. Connect and balance these two forces with supportive hawthorn, protective rosemary, insightful nutmeg, and sunny chamomile.

Snow Moon in Leo Tea Materials
1 tsp hawthorn berries
1 tsp rosemary
½ tsp chamomile
¼ tsp nutmeg

Anna is the herbalist behind The Herbology Faerie. She shares recipes, lore, and wisdom with a simple, hygge, folk approach and promotes herbalism for health, hobby, and personal fulfillment. When she's not busy formulating herbal recipes in her home apothecary, Anna can usually be found outdoors with her three wildlings. Visit her website at theherbologyfaerie.com, or on Instagram @theherbologyfaerie

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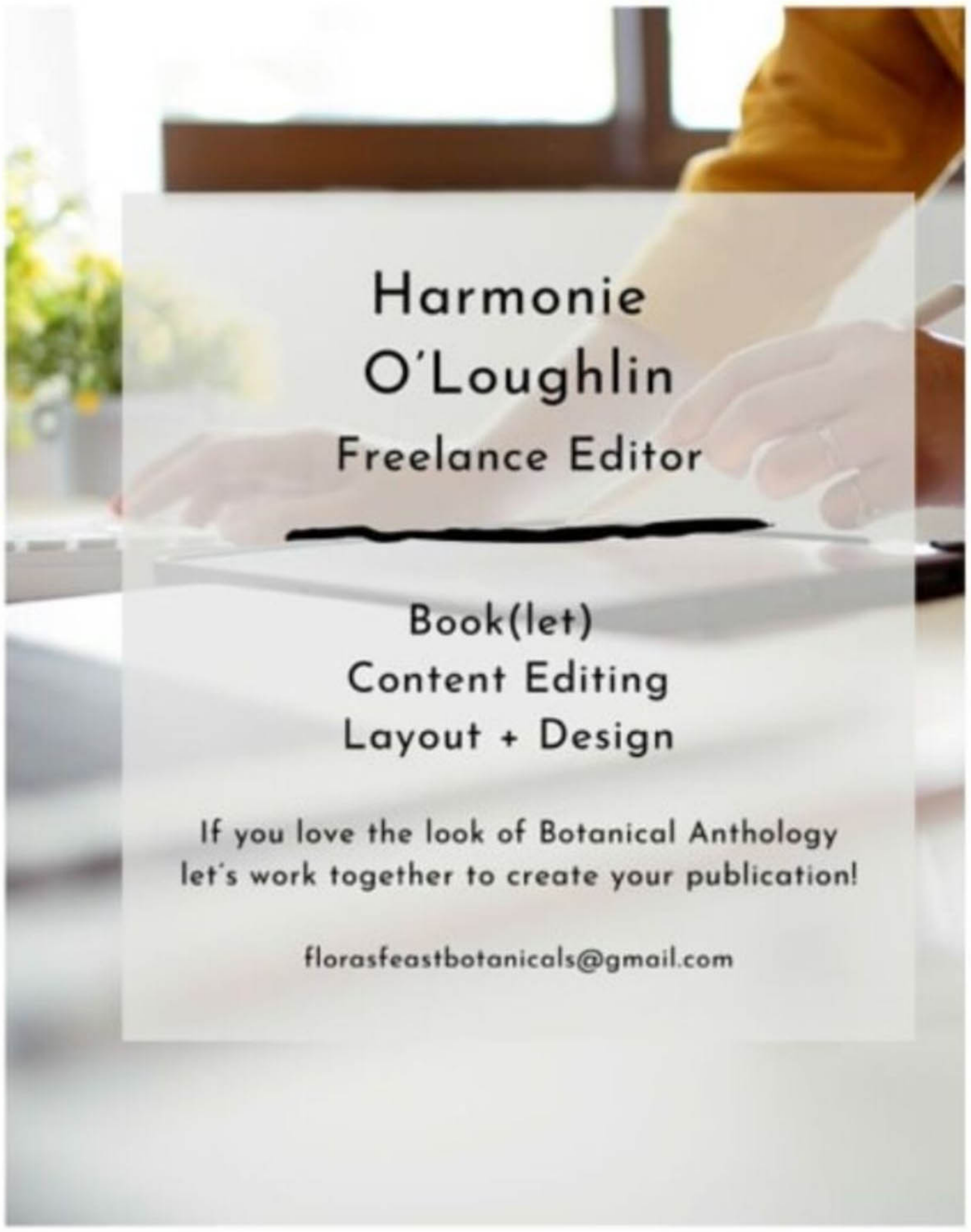


Harmonie O'Loughlin

Freelance Editor

Book(let)
Content Editing
Layout + Design

If you love the look of Botanical Anthology let's work together to create your publication!

florasfeastbotanicals@gmail.com

Anna Reisz Editing

Experienced editor providing copy editing, proofreading & more specializing in herbalism, recipes, gardening, & nature topics

www.annareiszediting.com

SISTERHOOD IN THE SEASON OF STILLNESS

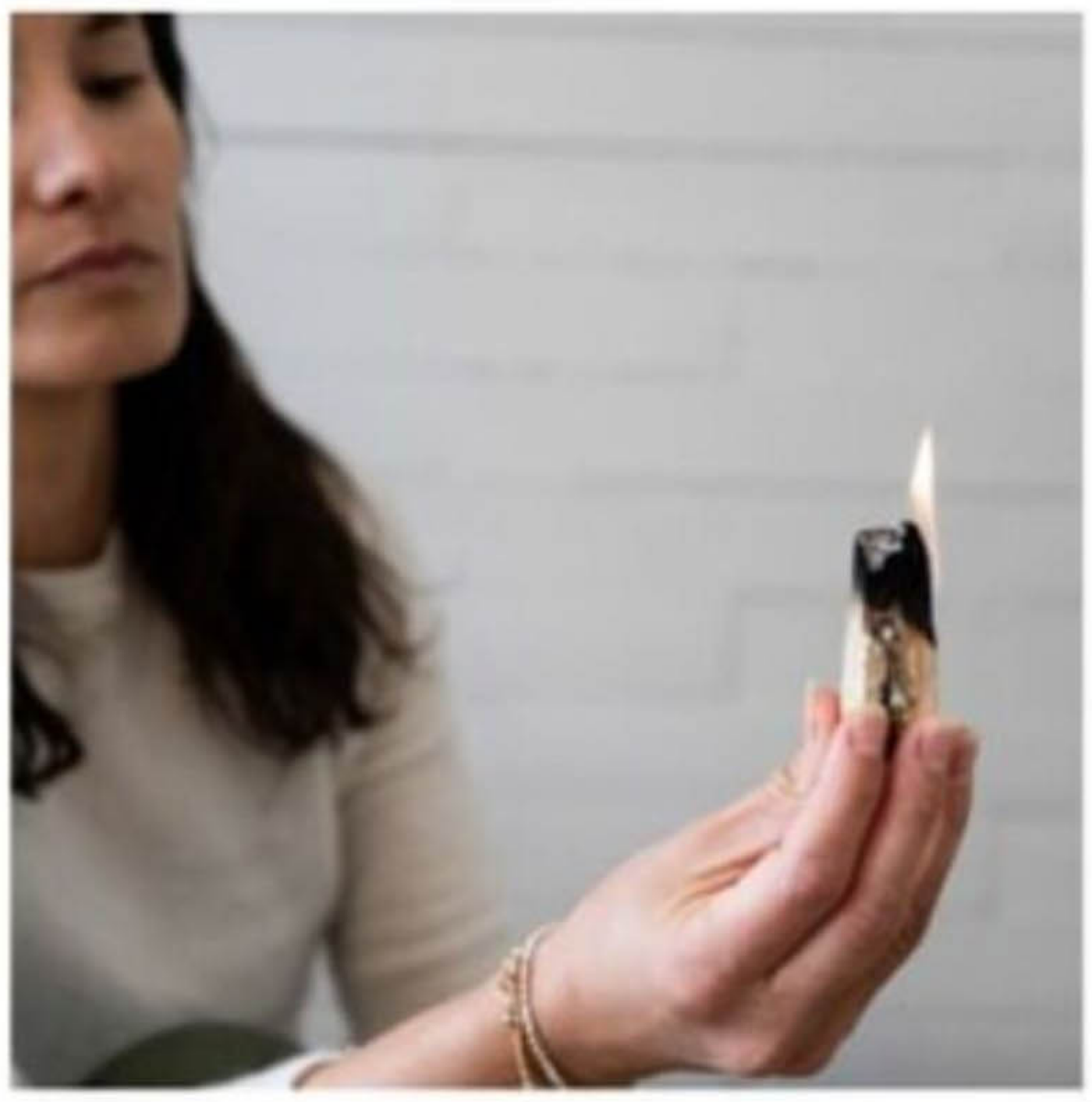
WINTER WOMEN'S CIRCLE

BY DANIELA REY

Winter can be challenging for many, with shorter days and the physical toll of cold weather often leading to feelings of isolation and monotony. While some embrace the beauty of this season, others may experience emotional strain, feeling stuck in a cycle of never-ending tasks. This is where the magic of a women's circle comes in—a supportive space for connection and reflection, offering warmth and community when it's needed most. More than just a gathering, a women's circle is a sanctuary where women can share their experiences and reconnect with the cycles of nature, reminding each other that they are not alone.

Creating a winter women's circle starts with intention and a little preparation. Inquire with friends and connect with plant-centered people in your community. If you're unsure who to invite, consider reaching out to local herb shops or a wellness center like a yoga studio, as they may appreciate intentional gatherings like this. Keeping the circle small—around 5-10 people—can encourage deeper conversation and connection. An open invitation for participants to bring like-minded friends can also enrich the experience by fostering diversity and shared interests.

When the time comes to host your circle, choose a quiet, comfortable indoor space where everyone can gather in a circle, enhancing warmth and intimacy with cozy blankets, cushions, and candles to reflect winter's stillness. Create an altar in the middle of the circle with seasonal herbs like rosemary and lavender, meaningful objects, or an offering bowl where participants can place a small stone or token to infuse with the circle's energy and take home, helping to anchor them with purpose and connection.



Before the circle begins, burn rosemary or ethically-sourced palo santo to clear the space and set the intention for the gathering. Rosemary brings freshness and mental clarity, while palo santo's warm, grounding scent promotes calm and clears away stagnant energy. This practice creates a threshold for participants to cross as they enter the circle, symbolizing the transition into a sacred, shared space.

As the facilitator, start by welcoming everyone and setting an intention for the gathering, acknowledging the season and your circle's focus. Invite each participant to introduce themselves and share what drew them to the circle; this "check-in" fosters openness and helps establish a safe, sacred space for sharing.

After introductions, invite participants to take part in a tea ritual featuring a blend of nourishing nettles, warming cinnamon, and uplifting orange peel. Each person serves a cup of tea to the woman seated next to her and passes the teapot to the next person, symbolizing the practice of giving and receiving. This simple act encourages both generosity and the often-overlooked practice of receiving graciously. The tea ritual helps everyone settle into the moment and creates a shared experience.

As the tea ritual moves from hand to hand through the circle, offer an anointing oil with frankincense, rosemary, and lavender. Invite each participant to apply the oil to their hands and take a deep breath inhaling the aroma, encouraging a connection to the herbs through their senses. This blend of essential oils brings a grounding presence to the moment, helping participants feel calm and centered as they prepare to share and reflect.

Encourage participants to bring a journal and a pen and introduce a simple seasonal prompt to reflect on winter's themes: "What are you embracing in this season of stillness, and what seeds of intention do you want to plant for the spring?" Invite them to share any reflections that arise, either in the order of the circle or by allowing those who feel moved to speak first. These moments of sharing within the safety of the circle provide powerful opportunities for women to express themselves and practice respectful listening to one another.

As you bring the circle to a close, take a moment to express gratitude for everyone's openness and the courage they showed in sharing their experiences and vulnerabilities during the gathering. Invite everyone to join again for a spring gathering, where you can explore new themes and continue to deepen your relationship with one another and the natural world. Remind them that these seasonal circles offer a beautiful opportunity to celebrate growth, renewal, and the cycles of life together.

Winter, with its challenges and emotional weight, can be softened by the connection found in community. Women's circles offer a space to share, support, and remind each other that no one is alone in their struggles. And through the power of herbal rituals, the body and spirit are strengthened during this season, offering nourishment, resilience, and a sense of calm. Together, we can embrace the beauty and stillness of winter while leaning on the wisdom of nature for support.

Daniela Rey, a Colombian herbalist and teacher in Southern California, combines herbal wisdom from her mother and grandmother with her passion for community and nature. She runs Growing Up Rooted, an herbal apothecary offering plant-based remedies like teas, tinctures, and salves. Explore her online course, A Journey Through Medicinal Herbs, to deepen your connection with medicinal plants. Discover her products at growinguprooted.com and follow her on Instagram @growinguprooted

ENGLISH IVY

FOR GOOD FORTUNE, FIDELITY + PROTECTION

BY HANNAH FOREST

English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) paints an image of whimsy - of old buildings with sprawling vines, the nostalgia of times past and an ageless beauty that only gets better the wilder it becomes. Ivy is known the world over and has a long, rich history of use both to promote herbal healing and throughout many folk tales of yore. One can look to the past to offer insight into ways to work with it in modern times, and ivy is a plant medicine that still holds great value in contemporary herbal practice.

Native to Europe, the tenacious evergreen is closely associated with the Greek God Dionysus (known as Bacchus in Roman times), the God of wine, pleasure and festivity and son of Zeus and Semele. This plant was considered sacred to Dionysus, who wore a crown of ivy upon his head in all depictions. It features heavily in the Greek mythos surrounding him, likely leading to this plant's reputation as a hangover remedy when bruised and boiled into wine. As time went on, ivy was hung outside of taverns as a sign that wine was sold there.

In Ancient Greece, ivy was said to have grown around the temple of Hymenaios, the Greek God of marriage and was woven into a crown that was presented to Liber, a God of fertility. This mythology has translated into the ivy plant being gifted to newlyweds as a talisman of a healthy marriage, encouraging honesty, loyalty and devotion, as well as being offered to those wishing to call in fertility. Along these same lines, ivy was dedicated to the Egyptian God Osiris, a deity known to symbolize fertility as well as death, and was sacred to him.

OSTARA
BELTANE
LITHA
LUGHNASADH
IMBOLC
DEATH
REBIRTH
LIFE

English Ivy was adopted by the Christian church and can be found on the walls of cathedrals, as often happened with plants or traditions significant to pagan folk. Whilst pagan lore believed that ivy growing on homes and buildings offered protection to the occupants from harm or evil spirits, the church saw the evergreen nature of ivy as a symbol of everlasting life and as such, it is still seen carved on tombs today or left atop graves during All Souls Day.

Ivy was used in times gone as a tool for divination, either to discover a prediction of death for the following year or for young girls to find their future husband. As it has a resistance to frost, it shows up in many folkloric records around the time of the Winter Solstice or Yule including in several carols reaching as far back as the 15th century. It is said that ivy is considered a feminine archetype alongside prickly holly, which represents a masculine energy.

There are many varied thoughts as well as written and oral histories that speak to ivy's influence for both good and bad luck. One known custom that slid either side of the scale was that of bringing ivy indoors as a symbol of fertility and good fortune, but burning the plant once Candlemas arrived. If the ivy was not burnt before the end of Candlemas, author Susan Drury shared that unburnt ivy and other evergreens "would turn into pixies and plague the house in the coming year."

Today ivy is less commonly worked with in a medicinal sense, as it contains a compound that is considered toxic in large doses. Chesty coughs are the most common way that English ivy extract is used in a clinical setting; however, there are many ways to bring this plant into your garden and work with it in an energetic sense, too. In flower essence form for releasing harmful ties, as an altar adornment for Yule, woven into ivy crowns bringing good fortune to the bride, and plant meditations to remain deeply rooted in the present moment are all ways to enjoy the gifts of ivy. This ancient plant deserves reverence, respect, and to continue to be enjoyed by kin for many moons to come.

Hannah Forest is a mountain-dwelling Australian folk herbalist, qualified naturopathic practitioner and passionate supporter of community herbalism. She is a mama, a maker of plant elixirs and an avid writer with a background rooted in both clinical practice and nature-based spiritual craft. You can find her chatting @hannahforest.herbalist, mixing potions @grown.botanicals and hosting the Old Ways for the New Age podcast.

POISONOUS
GIFTS
BY LAURIE BIANCIOTTO

Have you notice that many plants offered as a gift for end-of-year festivities are poisonous? It is due to their natural flowering season being winter! Winter is traditionally a time of death: death of the year, death of the sun, death of nature as the fauna sleep. However, on the winter solstice the sun is reborn as the days start to get longer.

The act of gifting these specific plants is a way of giving rebirth and hope after the darkest days of the year, as they are stronger than the cold temperatures, the snow, and stronger than death. So maybe the only thing stronger than death is what can cause death?

HELLEBORE

Hellebore (*Helleborus niger*), also called Christmas rose, is a green to white, sometimes pink flowering plant of the *Ranunculaceae* family. Its roots are black, hence the Latin-derived name “niger.” Hellebore contains toxic glucosides called helleborein (active over the heart) and helleborine (paralyzing the nervous system). An intoxication can result in vertigo, tinnitus, lowering heartbeats, nausea, diarrhea, breathing and visual issues, convulsions and death.

The Romans referred to it as the "Christmas rose" because of its winter blooming, and it was sometimes used in purification rites. In Greek mythology, it was often associated with stories of resurrection and healing due to its medicinal properties. It was believed to cure madness and other mental ailments, making it a favored plant in ancient practices. In certain cultures, black hellebore was also seen as a symbol of protection against evil spirits.

HOLLY

Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), the well-known, red-berried shrub from the *Aquifoliaceae* family, contains tannins and a glucoside called ilicine. The ingestion of a few berries for a child causes serious gut inflammation leading to death.

Holly is traditionally associated with the winter solstice and Yule celebrations. It was believed to bring good luck and protection during the cold months, symbolizing life and vitality amidst winter's darkness. In Christian tradition, Holly's sharp leaves symbolize the crown of thorns worn by Jesus, while the red berries represent his blood, embodying sacrifice and rebirth. For the ancient druids and Celts, holly was seen as a protective plant that warded off evil spirits.

HYACINTH

Hyacinth (*Hyacinthus orientalis*) is a flowering plant of the *Liliaceae* family, well known for its variety of colors. The bulbs of hyacinths contain glycosides, particularly oxalic acid, which can cause adverse reactions when consumed, depending on the dose; this can lead to nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, difficulty breathing, and an increased heart rate. Handling hyacinth bulbs can cause skin irritation or allergic reactions in sensitive individuals due to the presence of compounds in the bulb.

According to myth, during a discus throw, Apollo accidentally killed Hyacinthus when the discus struck him. Devastated by his loss, Apollo mourned deeply. In his grief, Apollo decided to honor Hyacinthus by transforming him into a flower, which became a symbol of resurrection and renewal, representing the cycle of life and death.

MISTLETOE

Mistletoe (*Viscum album*) is a parasitic and flowering plant of the *Loranthaceae* family. Although it has a history of medicinal uses, an ingestion of an excessive dose of its alkaloids and glucosides can result in neuro-muscular depression, paraplegia, a loss of sensitivity, stopping of heart activity and breathing, then death.

Mistletoe was sacred to the druids, who associated its milky white berries with fertility and life, often using it in rituals, especially during the winter solstice. In Norse legends, mistletoe is famously tied to the story of Balder, the god of light and purity. His mother, Frigg, made all plants and creatures vow not to harm him, but she overlooked mistletoe. Loki, the trickster god, fashioned a spear from mistletoe that ultimately led to Balder's death. Afterward, Frigg decreed that mistletoe should symbolize love and peace, leading to the tradition of kissing under the mistletoe.

Laurie Bianciotto is an artist and writer focusing her work around poisonous plants. She is the author of "La Voie du Poison," first book in French language on the topic of the Poison path. Laurie is also a Torchbearer in the Covenant of Hekate.

CUETLAXOCHITL

UNTANGLING THE HISTORY OF A CHRISTMAS FLOWER

BY KEIA LEE LEWIS

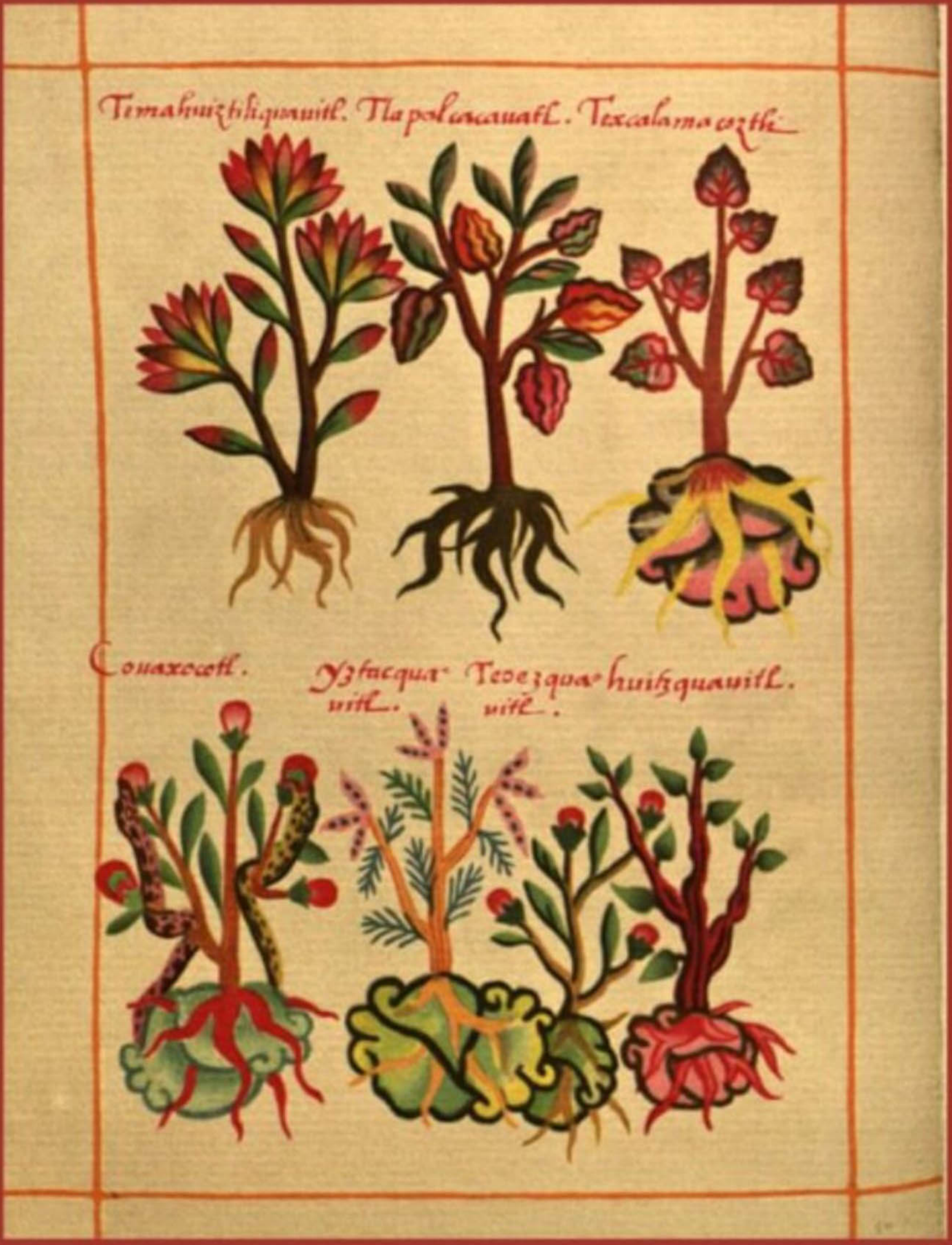
In the United States, the holiday season and poinsettias have become inextricably intertwined. We take for granted this flower that adorns stores, churches and homes throughout the season of giving. Many people have no idea that this *flor bonita* (beautiful flower) has such a deep and rich history within Indigenous Central American herbalism.

In Nahuatl, the Indigenous language of the Mexica (often referred to as 'the Aztecs'), the infamous poinsettia is known as *cuetlaxochitl* (kwet-la-sho-cheet). The translation is said to roughly mean, "flower that withers, mortal flower that perishes like all that is pure."

Other potential translations are "leather flower" or "flower that grows in residues." Pre-Spanish colonization, the Mexica empire had beautifully cultivated gardens with ornamental and medicinal plants including the cuetlaxochitl. We know this because of the surviving codices and documents from the Spanish conquerors. The Catholic friars had Native Mexica people write many of the codices which were then translated by the church.

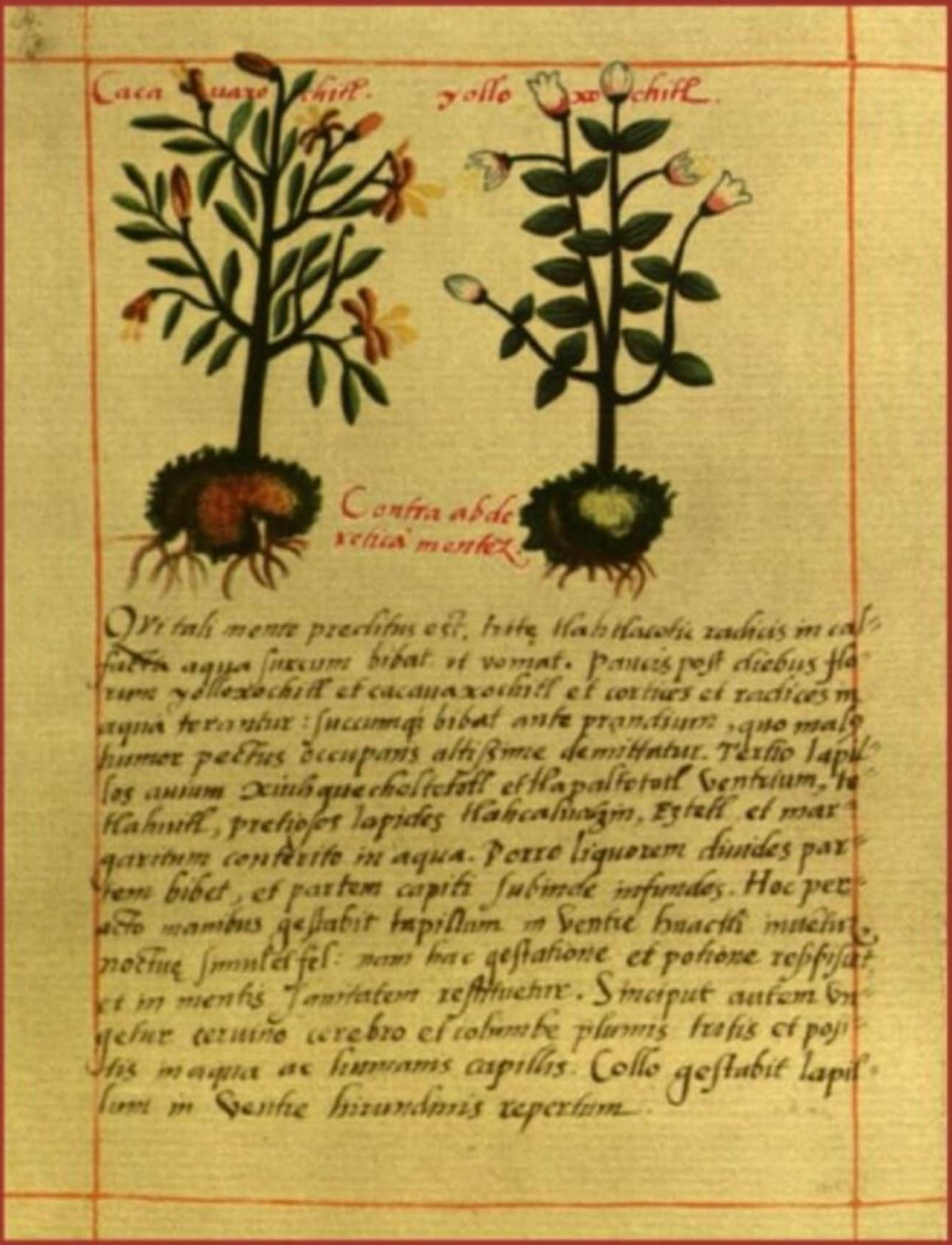
Mexica folklore has several origin stories surrounding the cuetlaxochitl. One tale claims the flower started out white and eventually turned red to remind the Mexica of the power in their blood sacrifices. Another legend states that the flower turned red in mourning after the Aztec Triple Alliance conquered other Indigenous peoples of the area. The cuetlaxochitl has also been associated with the *teoteoh* (deities) Huitzilopochtli and Xochiquetzal. This highlights the duality that is woven throughout the psyche of Mexica culture and philospohy. Huitzilopochtli is an extremely masculine teotl associated with war, whereas Xochiquetzal exemplifies beauty and is a teotl associated with all things deeply feminine.

During colonization, the legends shift. There are multiple stories saying *la flor* (the flower) turned red on Christmas Eve throughout Central America. This was during a time when Catholic friars and priests were trying to convert the Indigenous populations. Due to these various myths, the cuetlaxochitl was deemed *flor de nochebuena*, which translates to "flower of the blessed night." In turn, Christmas Eve is when many Mexican and Mexican-American families celebrate the Christmas holiday.



While all of these tales had a purpose, one thing we know is true is the aforementioned color change. Due to a process called photoperiodism, a plant will change as the amount of daylight increases or decreases. This helps the plant adapt to seasonal and environmental shifts. In the case of our cuetlaxochitl, it will start changing from white to red in the winter because the days get shorter. To hasten the color shift, growers today will keep the flower in 12 hours of darkness for 5 days to birth the red cuetlaxochitl that is used as decor during the holidays.

The story of how this Mexica flower ended up in the United States is straight from the colonial history books. In 1825, Congressman Joel Poinsett of South Carolina was appointed as United States Minister to Mexico. In the U.S., Poinsett is known for co-founding the Smithsonian Institution. What is less known is that while Andrew Jackson wrote the horrendous Indian Removal Act policy, Poinsett was the perpetrator. Today, many people know this by another name, The Trail of Tears. Like many Anglo-American men of this era, Poinsett was an extreme nationalist who fancied himself a renaissance man. One of his hobbies was botany. While in Mexico, Poinsett came across the cuetlaxochitl and its legend. He took clippings and seeds to share with his colleagues.


Cacauaxochitl.
yolloxochitl.
Contra abde
ritica mentem

Qvi tali mente preditus eſt, herbe tlahtlacotic radicis in calfacta aqua ſuccum bibat et vomat. Paucis poſt diebus florum yolloxochitl et cacauaxochitl et cortices et radices in aqua terantur: ſuccumq bibat ante prandium, quo malus humor pectus occupans altiſsime demittatur. Tertio lapillos avium xiuhquechol tototl et tlapaltototl ventrium, tetlahuitl, preciosos lapides tlahcalhuazin, eztetl et margaritum contrita in aqua. Porro liquorem divides partem bibet, et partem capiti ſubinde infundes. Hoc peracto manibus geſtabit lapillum in ventre huacth inventum, noctuq ſimul et fel: nam hac geſtatione et potione reſipiſcat, et in mentis ſanitatem reſtituetur. Sinciput autem ungetur termino cerebro et columbe plumis tritis et poſitis in aqua ac humanis capillis. Collo geſtabit lapillum in ventre hirundinis repertum.

In his retirement, Poinsett made a small fortune by cultivating and selling this “Christmas flower.” This led to cuetlaxochitl eventually being given the genus name *Poinsettia*, thus robbing the plant and the people of the land it came from of its beautiful history.

Cuetlaxochitl is more than an ornamental holiday plant. Beyond its meaningful history, it is still connected to the descendants of the Mexica people today. Within *curanderismo*, Mexican and Mexican American traditional healing practices, cuetlaxochitl is still used for its curative properties. The misconception that it is toxic to humans and other animals is due to an urban legend from 1919 that has since been discredited. Some of the traditional uses of cuetlaxochitl, such as those listed in the 15th century Badianus Manuscript, include lung support during common colds, a poultice for digestive and skin issues, healing teas for supporting menstruation an aid for mental acuity, and more.

Keia Lee Lewis is a weaver of words, energía and ancestral healing. She is a spiritual activist, yerbera (folk herbalist) and consejera (spiritual advisor/coach). She is a student on the path of curanderismo, the Mexican Traditional Medicine way of her grandmothers and grandfathers. Keia owns a small botánica and offers 1x1 healing services. Check out her substack Chicana Rising, find her on socials @keiaquetzalli and support her business at botanicaquetzalli.com

Celebrate

Maria Ilves

A MODERN + MAGICAL
MOTHER'S NIGHT
BY JESSIE LEHSON

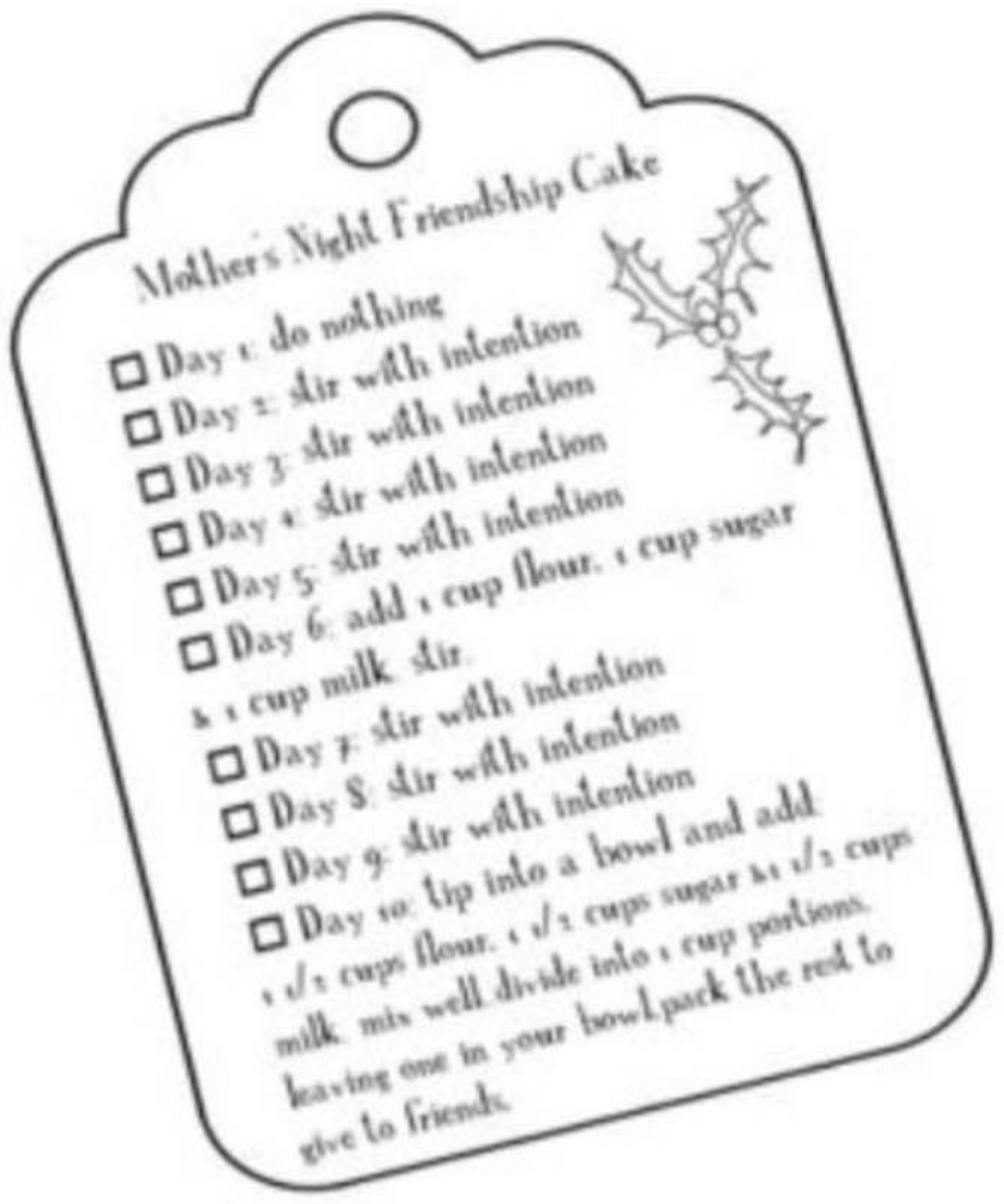
Mother's Night, or *Mōdraniht*, is a lesser-known holiday shrouded in mystery. It is most often associated with the first night of Yule, although there is conflicting information about its traditional date. There is only one brief direct mention of the occasion found in scholarship, by historian and medieval English monk Bede, who noted that, "*[...] the very night that is sacrosanct to us, these people [pagans] call [...] 'mothers' night.*'" There are corroborating references that, while they don't mention the holiday by name, do appear to reference Mother's Night. One of the connected traditions involves finishing all of your housework before the festivities of Yule and putting down your weaving for the holidays.

There is something tantalizing about this holiday. A whole day to celebrate mothers at a time when they are so often overworked, overwhelmed, and at the brink of their mental load? Let's put down our "weaving" and bring this night back into fashion. Make time for yourself. Feed your soul.

A strong support system is one of the most important parts of both self care and being a mom, and one of the most intangible. Gone are the days of villages of women raising children together, and motherhood can feel isolating. While it may not be feasible to gather with friends during the busy holiday season, celebrate Mother's Night by baking a special Mother's Night Gingerbread Friendship Cake. This is an old-fashioned recipe that uses a yeast based starter which you share and pass on to others as a physical representation of your network. Each time the starter is cultivated, it picks up wild yeast from its new location. As it grows and moves between people it takes a little of each place with it.

The cake includes all the usual holiday spices which together embody coziness and warmth with the addition of a few herbs to honor mothers specifically. Motherwort is the quintessential mother's herb, steady, strong and resilient. Linden blossoms soothe and calm like mothers do for their families. Yarrow is known as the warrior plant, and is included because what mom isn't a warrior?

Preparing the starter is a ten day process and should be approached with intention. Think about the strength of motherhood as you stir and tend your starter. You will use some of the starter for yourself to make two cakes, one to keep and one to give. The rest of the starter is packaged to give to friends along with the instructions to care for the starter and a recipe for the cake. Create an email or even a Google form so you can track how far your starter has traveled and how wide your network really is. Finding and recognizing your support network is self care. You might even make some new friends along the way!



Mother's Night Friendship Cake

☐ Day 1: do nothing
☐ Day 2: stir with intention
☐ Day 3: stir with intention
☐ Day 4: stir with intention
☐ Day 5: stir with intention
☐ Day 6: add 1 cup flour, 1 cup sugar & 1 cup milk. stir.
☐ Day 7: stir with intention
☐ Day 8: stir with intention
☐ Day 9: stir with intention
☐ Day 10: tip into a bowl and add 1 1/2 cups flour, 1 1/2 cups sugar & 1 1/2 cups milk. mix well. divide into 1 cup portions, leaving one in your bowl. pack the rest to give to friends.

Gluten Free Friendship Cake Starter

Materials

1 c gluten-free flour, such as brown rice, light buckwheat or teff
1 c milk
1 c sugar
1 pinch motherwort
1 pinch linden blossoms
1 pinch yarrow

Method

Add the first three ingredients to a bowl. Whisk well. Add the herbs and stir them in with intention, thinking about friendship and support.

Transfer the mixture to a large mason jar. Replace the top with a piece of fabric or paper towel to allow for air exchange. Screw the ring in place.

Follow the 10-day process for the starter.

Measure out one cup for yourself, and divide the rest into one cup portions, either in mason jars or plastic freezer bags. Attach the starter care tags and the recipe cards and give to friends and family.

Notes

- This is a gluten free recipe, but you can substitute all-purpose flour, if desired. Brown rice, light buckwheat or teff flours will make a strong sourdough. Use whichever you prefer or in combination.
- Sourdough starters must be attended to on a daily basis. However, the starter can be frozen for up to a year, for those friends who aren't ready to immediately take on the baking. To use a frozen starter, begin the process on day one once it is fully thawed.
- This recipe is a type of starter often called "Amish friendship bread." It can be used to make a variety of cakes, bread and other treats. You can find more ideas online by searching for friendship bread starter recipes.

Gingerbread Friendship Cake

Materials

1 c prepared starter
4 large eggs
1 c vegetable or coconut oil
⅔ c molasses
⅔ c brown sugar
½ c applesauce
2 tsp vanilla
2 tsp cinnamon
2 tsp ground ginger
½ tsp ground nutmeg
½ tsp ground cardamom
¼ tsp ground cloves
4 tsp baking powder
1 tsp xanthan gum
½ tsp kosher salt
½ tsp baking soda
50 grams almond flour
70 grams light buckwheat flour
50 grams tapioca flour
1 tsp ginger, fresh, grated, optional
1 pinch motherwort, optional
1 pinch linden blossoms, optional
1 pinch yarrow, optional

Method

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Add all of the ingredients to the bowl in the order listed. Mix well with a whisk.

Divide the batter between two greased loaf pans. Bake for 5 minutes. Lower the oven temperature to 350°F. Bake for 45 minutes to an hour or until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean. If the top starts to get too dark, tent the pans with foil.

Notes

- This recipe has not been tested with wheat flour but should work by replacing the almond and light buckwheat flours with a cup of AP flour. The tapioca flour can be substituted with cornstarch if desired.
- Light buckwheat is much milder than conventional buckwheat flour and worth seeking out for gluten free baking. Brown rice flour can be substituted.

Download Recipe Cards

Jessie Lehson is the author of seasonal children's books about the wheel of the year and nature. She is the founder and former director of Watershed Public Charter School and was a professor of sculpture and environmental artist. Lehson is an avid chicken keeper, master gardener and permaculture designer. Follow her at wineberrypress.com and @wineberryadventurescouts

GLØGG
A TOAST TO WINTER SPIRITS
BY JENN CAMPUS

In Norway, throughout December gløgg reigns as a quintessential festive beverage. But it's more than just a drink—it's a connection to centuries of tradition, ritual, and trade.

The word itself comes from the Swedish verb *glödga*, meaning "to heat something," and gløgg has been a part of Scandinavian winter celebrations since the 16th century. Yet, the practice of spicing wine traces even further back to the Romans, who steeped wine with spices for flavor and medicinal properties. As trade routes expanded across Europe, spices like cinnamon, cloves, ginger, and cardamom became more common in festive drinks, bringing warmth to the dark months.

The act of gathering to drink gløgg during the Yule season honors the history of bringing light into the darkness. Traditionally served hot and garnished with raisins and almonds, it's the kind of drink you share in good company, symbolizing the hearth's warmth and the brighter days to come. In days of old, this drink was a way to banish the cold and call for blessings of health and abundance.

The magic of gløgg lies in the mulling spices, a potent mix of plants that not only tantalize the taste buds but have been used for centuries for their beneficial properties. Cinnamon, traditionally used for its warming and energizing qualities, combines with cloves, known to ease digestion and protect against illness. Ginger, with its fiery heat, was historically used to stimulate circulation and ward off the chill of winter, making it a perfect addition to cold-weather elixirs. Cardamom, a fragrant seed often found in Scandinavian cuisine, promotes circulation and gastro-intestinal ease.

Historically, these spices also held a sacred place in rituals. Cinnamon, cloves, and ginger were often used as offerings to gods and incorporated into burial rites, symbolizing protection, purification, and passage into the next world while cardamom was believed to aid in clarity and inspiration. By stirring these spices into gløgg, we enjoy their flavor and partake in the ancient practice of honoring life and those beyond the veil.

Today, making gløgg is a simple yet meaningful ritual that ties us back to the ancestral practice of honoring the seasons. Whether gathered around a roaring fire or in a cozy kitchen, the process of stirring spices into wine reminds us of our connection to the earth and the cycles of life. As the pot simmers, we are called to reflect on the gifts of the winter season: rest, introspection, and the quiet magic of waiting for the light to return.

So this winter, raise a cup of gløgg to the long nights, the stars above, the ancient rituals of offering, and the deep roots that continue to nourish us.

Materials

2 bottles fruity red wine
1 c brandy
1 cinnamon stick
2 cardamom pods, cracked
4 cloves
1-inch knob of ginger
½ c sugar
Handful raisins
Handful slivered almonds

Method

Combine wine, brandy, sugar, and mulling spices in a large pot. Bring to a gentle simmer, being careful not to boil, then remove from heat.

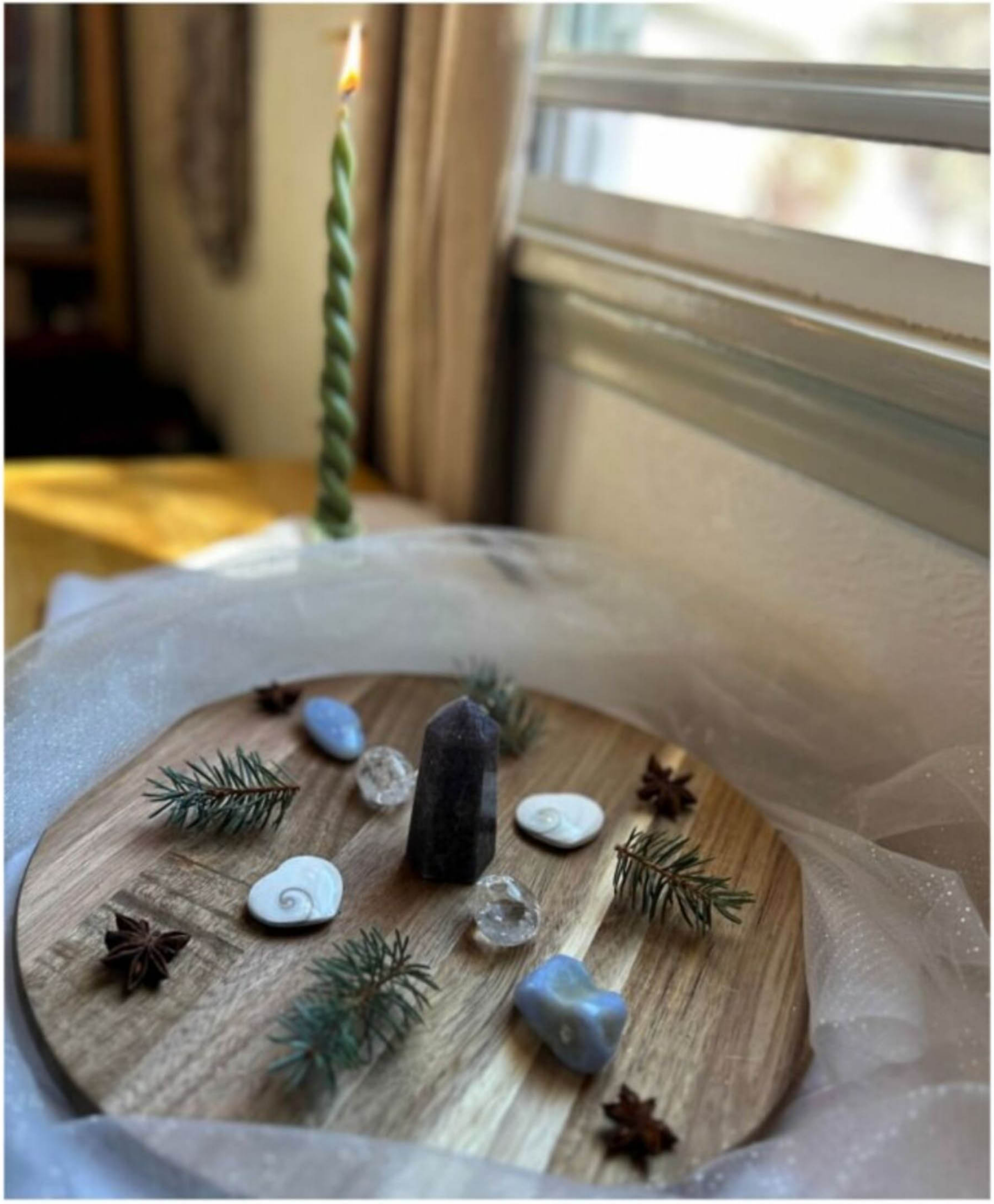
Let the mixture steep for at least 2 hours to allow the spices to infuse.

Reheat before serving, and garnish each cup with raisins and almonds.

Notes

- Serves 8-10.
- Wine suggestions include zinfandel, shiraz,
- or merlot.
- Brandy can be replaced with vodka.
- For an alcohol-free version, replace the alcohol with 32 ounces of fruit juice, such as grape, blackcurrant, or cherry juice.

Jenn Campus is the bestselling author of A Guide to Celebrating the 12 Days of Yule, which features this recipe and weaves the animist roots of Yule into our winter celebrations. She also wrote Witches' Brews: Teas, Sauces & Other Potions: Old World Lore & Recipes from Hearth & Hedge, sharing herbal recipes steeped in folklore and magic. Find her at jenncampusauthor.com



WINTER’S PEACE

SOLSTICE CRYSTAL + HERB GRID

BY CARRIE TUTTLE

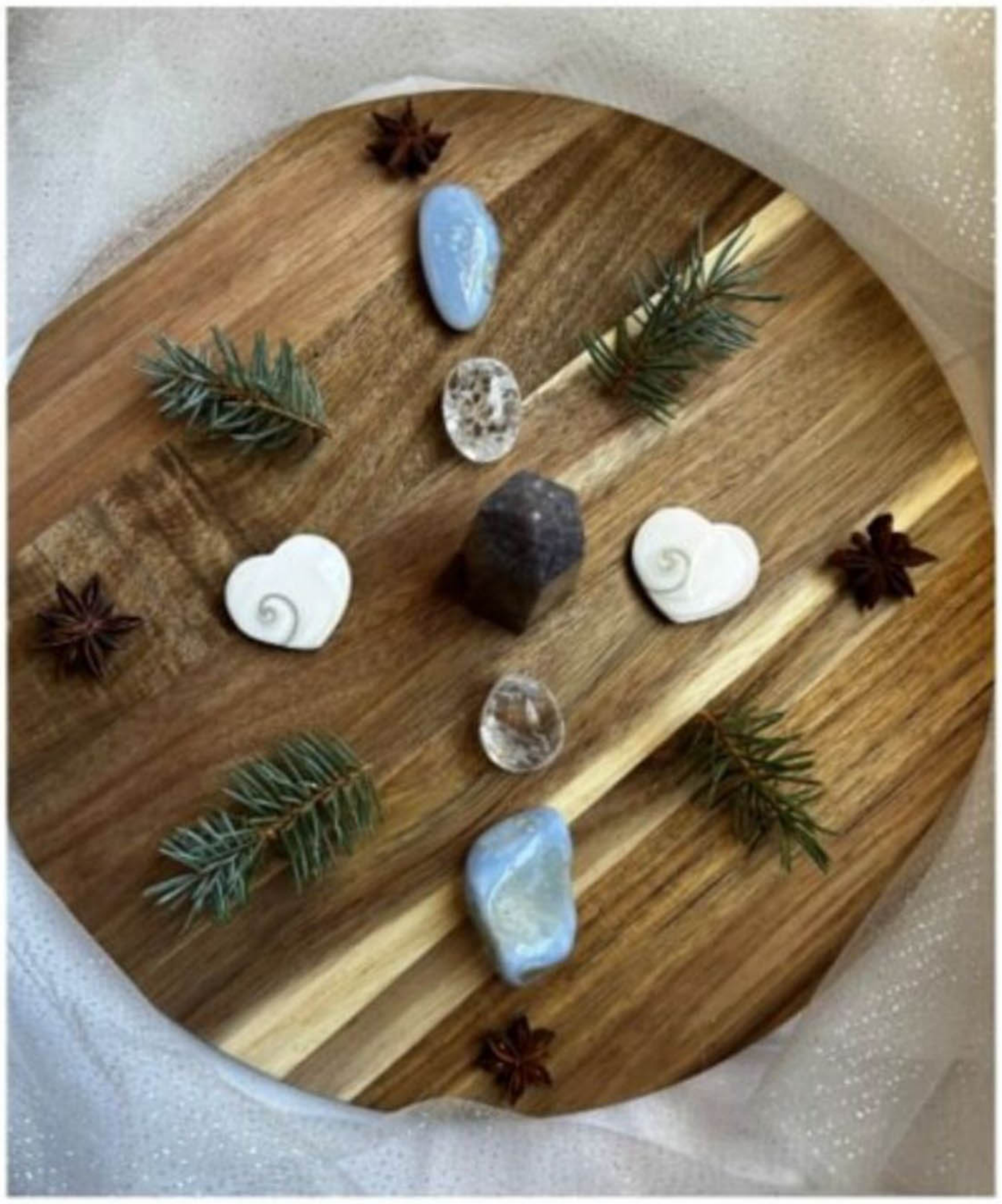
Winter solstice, also known as Yule, is celebrated on December 21st to mark the longest night of the year. In Celtic history, the solstice commemorated the great battle between the light and dark. The archetypal Holly King, signifying the old year and the darker part of the year, gives way to the Oak King, the lighter part of the year and increasing sunlight. Many choose to honor this day with quiet contemplation of the increasing light, during the cold of winter.

Crystal Grids are a method of communication with the universe through the element of sacred geometry. Sacred geometry is the mathematical language of the universe, and when we connect with it, we can tie our intentions to its energetic frequency. When adding an herbal, seed and stone element, we honor the plant and earth energies and ask for their assistance in connecting with the unseen. While the grids can take on nearly any shape, the most important element in its functionality is your clarity of purpose.

Stones + Herbs

Lepidolite Soothes anxiety and brings feelings of joy; it brings a sense of peace, serenity, and connection with cosmic energy.
Crackle Quartz Brings the energy of harmony, clarity, and calm into one's life; it differs only in appearance from clear quartz due to its crackle effect achieved through heat.
Angelite Promotes calmness and connection to higher power, as well as gentle self-expression, intuition, peace, and compassion; it allows us to embrace peace and stay in the moment.
Shiva Eye Shell Attracts harmony and promotes deep inner connections; it encourages a meditative state, and allows us to be in the flow with the energies of the season to bring inspiration, wisdom, and empathy.
Spruce Symbolizes eternal life, resilience, and strength; it represents our ability to endure through the winter, and find joy in the longer days ahead.
Star Anise Represents connection to others, inner peace, protection and prosperity; it promotes good luck and wards off negativity.

This grid is intended to be indoors, so find a quiet space such as an altar, desk, or low table, where you can see your grid, and it will remain undisturbed for the solstice.



Materials

1 lepidolite tower
2 angelite palm stones
4 whole star anise
4 spruce tips or other evergreen
2 crackle quartz
2 shiva eye shells
1 wooden gridding plate, optional

Method

Place the lepidolite tower at the center of the grid.

Place 2 crackle quartz above and below the lepidolite on the vertical plane. Place two angelite palm stones above and below the crackle quartz. Place two shiva eye shells on either side of the lepidolite on the horizontal plane. Place the 4 star anise below and to the outer edge of the angelite and the shiva eye shells. Place the spruce tips between the rows of stones.

As you place each stone and herb speak your intention, saying, "As I place these stones and plant allies, may the spirit of peace be with me on this solstice night."

The last step in gridding is activating the grid by energetically connecting each stone and herb to the center stone, weaving magical strands. Take your index finger and draw an energetic line between the center stone and each of the exterior elements while envisioning an energetic string connecting them all, with your intention to give thanks. When finished your grid is activated.

Place your hands over the grid and sit quietly in meditation. You may wish to imagine the dark and peaceful night sky filled with stars, giving way to the light of the morning as the sun rises, knowing your peace and serenity also rises from within.

Imagine the light of dawn surrounding you, as you are filled with hope. Though Winter still lies ahead, the daylight increases and the Oak King has taken his place again in the cycle of the year. Spend some time in meditation, considering the light of solstice morning.

The grid may be left up for the winter solstice or for an entire moon cycle. Check in on the grid frequently to realign if necessary.

When ready to deactivate, disassemble and cleanse your crystals in moonlight, salt, or other method of choice.

Carrie is an environmental educator, mom, and poet. She has been practicing old school Wicca for 30 years, and weaves green witchery into her daily practices. She lives in Wyoming with her family, pets, and gardens. Carrie can be found on Instagram @carrietuttle2964

GINGER CITRUS
SOLSTICE CAKE
BY CASSANDRA HEIST

The winter solstice celebrates the beginning of winter, as well as the movement from the darkness of the longest night to the return of sunlight. Early traditions recognized this day as the birth of the sun, with rituals to celebrate both light and warmth. Winter baking has long been enjoyed for not only nourishment and warmth, but also as a time to slow down, give thanks for the bounty of the year, and celebrate with loved ones through rich treats. Honor the winter solstice, the return of the sun, and the beauty of the natural world with a warm homemade recipe and candlelit feast.

A ginger citrus cake is a magical addition to any solstice celebration. Weave together the spicy warm depth of ginger with the bright sweetness of orange, an ode to sunny harvests under the heat of the sun. The duality of spice and sweet represents the beautiful duality of both darkness and light during this season. Ginger and orange nurture the soul and the body as a whole with antioxidants, vitamins, and anti-inflammatory properties needed in the winter season. Using dried orange adornment on the cake represents the sun and shapes a symbol of gratitude to our life-giving light, with rosemary for merriment to keep the season bright.

A festive cake is a joy to make with ingredients infused with intention to honor the magic of the solstice season. As a sort of birthday cake for the sun, this treat honors the old ways and the joyous return of the sun's rays. It is best enjoyed with loved ones amidst flickering candlelight or under returning sunlight. Celebrate the winter solstice in merry warmth of home and hearth, with those held near and dear to the heart.

Cake Materials

1 c butter, softened
½ c brown sugar
⅓ c orange juice, fresh
2 tsp vanilla extract
3 eggs
1 ½ c flour
2 tsp ginger, ground
1 tsp cinnamon, ground
½ tsp cloves
2 tsp orange zest
2 tsp baking powder
¼ tsp baking soda
½ tsp salt

Buttercream Materials

1 c butter, softened
1 tsp vanilla extract
2 tsp ginger, ground
½ tsp salt
3 c powdered sugar
2-3 tbsp orange juice, fresh
Dried orange slices
Candied ginger, chopped
Rosemary sprigs, fresh
Sparkling sugar sprinkles

Method

In a mixing bowl, cream together the butter and sugar. Add the orange juice and vanilla extract and mix well. Beat in the eggs, one at a time.

In a separate bowl, combine flour, spices, orange zest, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together. Mix the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients until just combined.

Pour cake batter into two prepared 6” round cake pans. Bake at 350°F for 30-35 minutes. Let cool.

Prepare the buttercream by beating together the butter, vanilla, ginger, and salt in a mixing bowl. Slowly add the powdered sugar, mixing well. Add in the orange juice one tbsp at a time until the buttercream reaches desired consistency.

Once the cakes have completely cooled, frost them with buttercream. Pipe on the remaining buttercream to your liking.

To decorate, add the dried orange slices to your cake. To create a sun shape, use one dried orange slice in the middle and cut another orange slice into eight evenly sized triangles as the sun’s rays. Add small rosemary sprigs and chopped candied ginger around the top and bottom of the cake. Sprinkle the cake with sparkling sugar to finish.

Notes

- Store the frosted cake in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to one week.
- Gluten-free flour can replace wheat flour.

Cassandra can be found tending heart, tending home, and tending flowers with her daughter. She loves to learn about plant medicine, natural dyes, and baking with botanicals. She believes in love, magic, and beauty for all. Follow her into the garden @lafemmeflorale to explore wildcrafting with flour, fibers, and flowers.

HERBAL

WINTER HEARTH

BY JULIA LINSTEADT

The hearth, often considered the heart of a home, has a long history of providing warmth, comfort, and evoking feelings of protection. For centuries, it served as the main source of heat and light, and was a place to cook and gather.

Beyond its practical functions, the hearth held symbolic significance, especially during the long, cold winter months when it became a central hub for rituals and herbal preparations. This deep-rooted connection between hearths and herbalism can be seen in various traditions, such as the yule log, the use of cinnamon sticks for warmth and fragrance, and the creation of herbal-infused soups and stews. Even if a home lacks a fireplace, the essence of a hearth is replicated when traditional practices continue.

The hearth offers endless possibilities for creating a cozy and festive atmosphere using the power of herbs. From the yule log tradition to fragrant herbal bundles and simmering cinnamon sticks, there are countless ways to incorporate natural elements into your home.

By experimenting with different combinations and crafting a hearth that is uniquely your own, you can transform your living space into a sanctuary of warmth, comfort, and natural beauty this winter. Gather your favorite herbs, light your fire, and enjoy the transformative power of the herbal hearth.

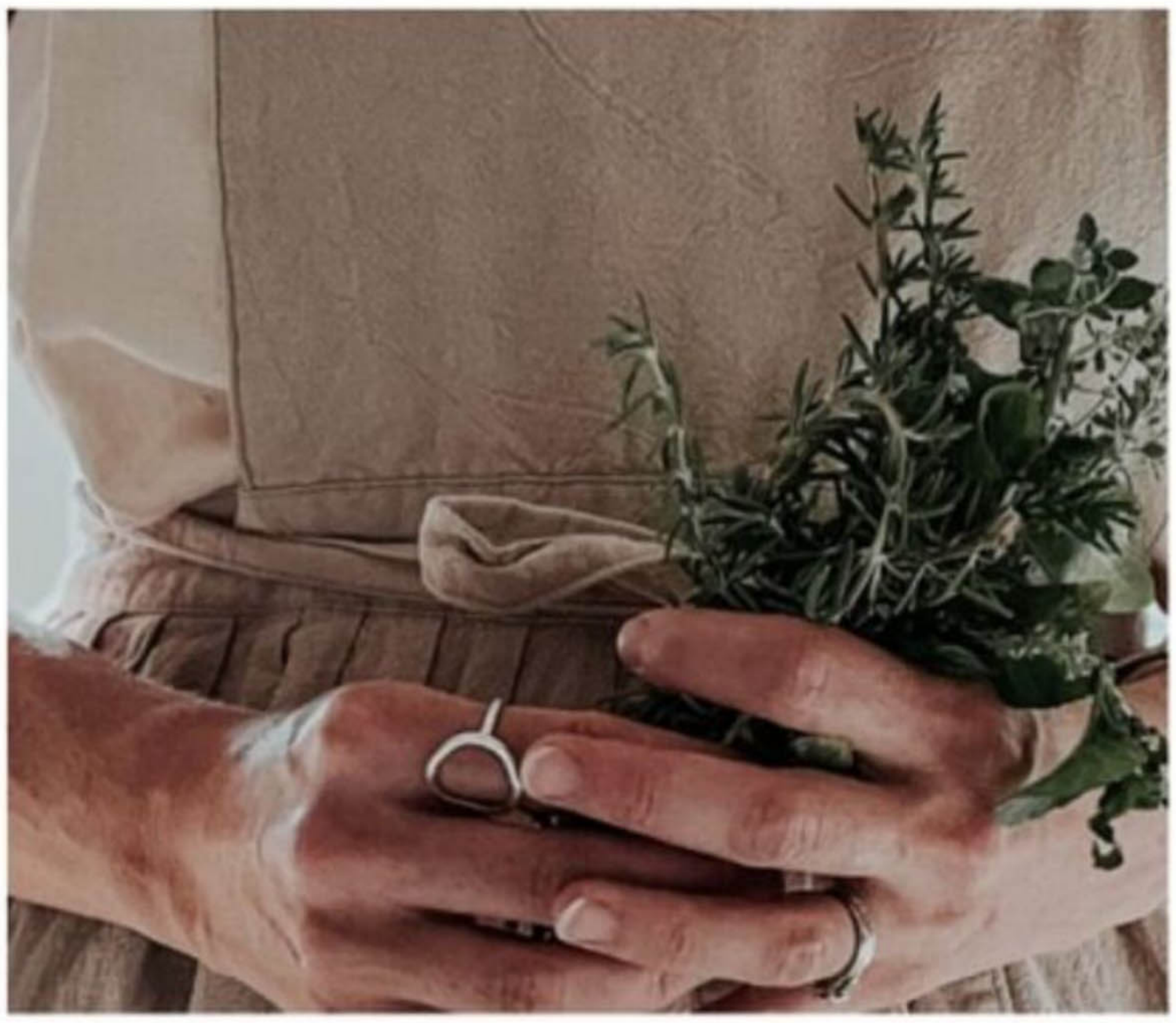
THE YULE LOG

One of the most beloved hearth traditions during the winter solstice is the burning of the yule log. It is meant to represent the return of the sun and the renewal of life.

Traditionally, a large log of either oak, cherry, or birch was selected and decorated with seasonal greenery, herbs, berries, and celebratory decorative ribbon before being placed in the hearth to burn throughout the winter solstice. No matter the wood choice, the burning log was believed to bring good luck, prosperity, and protection to the home.

Modern herbalists can incorporate this tradition into their homes by crafting a traditional yule log or smaller symbolic yule logs from natural materials like branches, pine cones, and dried herbs.

To create a small Yule Log, gather a bundle of twigs that fit comfortably in your hand and secure them with twine. Add layers of rosemary sprigs, sage leaves, and toyon berries to the bundle, fastening them with more twine, hot wax drippings, or hot glue. For extra fragrance, consider incorporating sprigs of thyme, pine trimmings, and cinnamon sticks as aromatic adornments.



FLAVORFUL HERBAL BOUQUET GARNIS

From the cozy hearth to the kitchen table, the comforting aromas and flavors of hardy herbs can bring a sense of warmth and tradition to winter meals. Sage, rosemary, thyme, tarragon, and parsley are just a few of the many herbs that can be incorporated into herbal bundles for cooking.

These bundles, often known as "bouquet garni" or "herb sachets," are a convenient way to add depth and complexity to stews, soups, and other winter dishes.

By creating herbal garnis, you can customize the flavors to your preferences and enjoy the satisfying aroma of simmering herbs in your home.

Simply gather 4-10 sprigs of your favorite woody herbs such as sage, rosemary, thyme, bay leaves, marjoram,and tarragon, and craft a small bouquet. Secure the stems of the herbs together with bakers twines and hang to dry.

To use, place directly into a pot of soup, or place the herbs into a cloth tea bag along with a few whole peppercorns for longer simmers.

SIMMERING CINNAMON

As a beloved herbal spice of the winter season, cinnamon has long been warming hearts and homes in the form of potpourri, teas, and as an important ingredient in baking spice blends.

Originating in Southeast Asia, cinnamon was prized for its fragrant aroma and medicinal properties. In ancient Rome, cinnamon was considered a luxury item, often used in perfumes and as a flavoring agent in food and drink.

Today, cinnamon continues to be a popular ingredient, especially in simmer pots. Simmering cinnamon sticks in water not only fills the home with a comforting scent but also unlocks cinnamon’s many benefits. Known for its antiviral, congestion-clearing, and warming properties, cinnamon can help soothe the body and mind during the colder months.

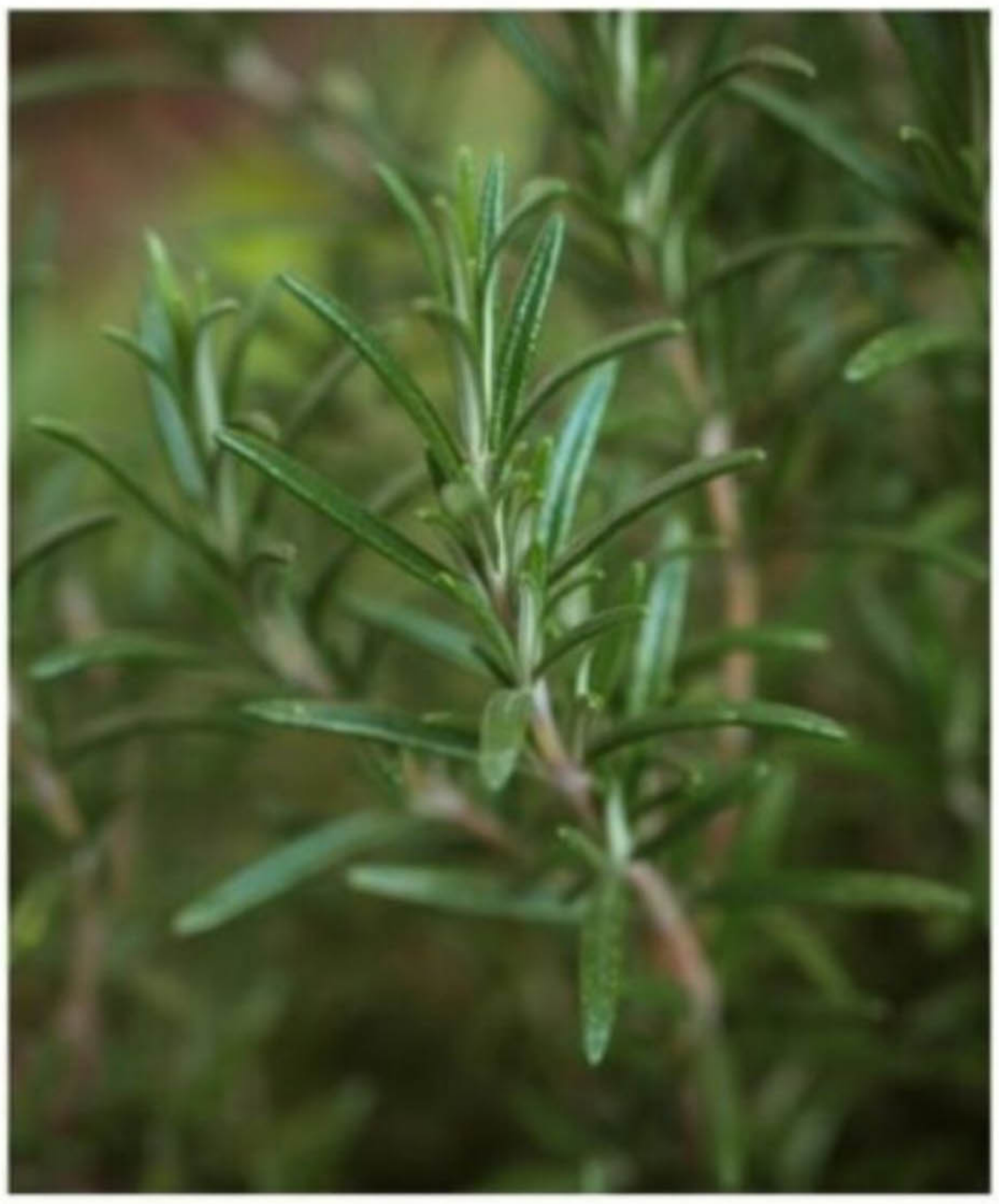
To make a cinnamon simmer pot is simple. Place 5-10 whole cinnamon sticks into at least 8 cups of water in a pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and set to simmer to fill your home with cinnamon’s relaxing aroma.

HERBAL FIRE STARTERS

For a truly aromatic and sustainable way to start your fires, consider crafting herbal fire starters. This ancient practice dates back to a time when fire was a precious resource, and starting it required skill and ingenuity. Early fire starters were often made from tinder, like dried leaves and twigs, and a flammable substance like animal fat or pine resin that ignited easily. Combining fragrant herbs such as rosemary, sage, and lavender with a bit of wax, you can create a modern-day version of these traditional fire starters, adding a touch of ancestral wisdom to your winter hearth.

To make a simple fire starter at home, cut a piece of parchment paper into roughly a 4” x 4” square. In the center, place pieces of the selected dried herbs and beeswax pellets or shavings from paraffin wax. Gather the materials together in the center of the parchment paper and twist the sides of the paper until a small pouch is formed. Store the fire starters in an airtight container near your fireplace for easy access. To use, place 1-2 of the herbal fire starters, along with chosen kindling, into the fireplace and ignite. The fire starter will aid in quick ignition of the kindling and release the aromas from the dried herbs for a relaxing sensory experience.

Nestled on a small farm in Northern California, Julia crafts a life rich in slow living and mindful solutions. Her writing at afarmtokeep.com explores the comforting world of herbs, gardening, cozy spaces, and the simple joys of crafting. Discover how to nourish your soul and create a home that truly warms the heart.



SACRED HERBS OF IMBOLC

HONORING BRIGID + THE AWAKENING EARTH

BY KATIE GLYER

Imbolc, one of four Celtic fire festivals, is celebrated around February 1st and marks the midpoint between winter and spring, symbolizing the return of light and the first stirrings of new life. It is a time to honor the goddess Brigid, who represents healing, creativity, fertility, and the sacred flame, as well as to clear stagnation and prepare for the growth and renewal of spring. Traditionally, Imbolc rituals focus on purification, hope, and planting intentions for the coming season.

Herbs associated with Brigid symbolize qualities of healing, protection, nourishing new beginnings, and tending the inner fire. They embody the energetics of Imbolc and help us attune to them physically and spiritually. Harness the fire element by using these herbs in a blend as an incense on top of a coal to clear and purify your home or any space that feels stagnant, or use it as a pelvic steam to promote circulation, clear stagnation, tone the uterine tissues, and relax tension.

Rosemary Rosemary's warm, dry, stimulating energetics align beautifully with Imbolc. It helps stimulate circulation, warm the tissues, and move stagnant energy. In spiritual practices, rosemary cleanses and purifies spaces and offers protection, traditionally used in rituals for safeguarding homes and families. Similarly, Brigid was often called upon as a protector of hearth and home. A sun-loving plant, rosemary is associated with the fire element. Since Brigid is associated with fire and the sacred flame, rosemary's fiery, warming qualities symbolize the return of the sun and warmth during Imbolc, which celebrates the first signs of spring's return and the gradually increasing daylight.

Lavender With a Latin name derived from *lavare*, which means "to wash," it's no wonder lavender has long been associated with cleansing and purification. Not only was it used by the ancient Romans in their baths, but it's been used for just as long to purify spaces, moving old energy out and welcoming the new in. One might suppose that the "washing" it really refers to takes place on the spiritual level, allowing the psyche to open, the mind to clear, and the heart to soften. This soothing, grounding energetic harkens back to Brigid's associations with healing and divination; this powerful duo of plant medicine and goddess opens us to our own ability to heal by washing away tension that causes stagnation to build up.

Angelica Aromatic, bitter, and slightly sweet, angelica warms and stimulates circulation, promoting blood flow to the digestive and female reproductive systems. Similarly to rosemary, it treats cold, damp stagnation and tension tissue states. As a relaxing stimulant, it increases circulation through the vasculature. Its emmenagogue properties help regulate and stimulate menstrual flow in cases of stagnation or coldness in the womb. An herb specific for the uterus, angelica has a strong tie with Brigid's reign over fertility, women, and childbirth.

Yarrow Yarrow has been used traditionally to treat wounds, prevent infection and stop bleeding, aligning with Brigid's identity as a healer. Yarrow's protective and healing attributes make it an appropriate herb to use in rituals honoring Brigid. Its pungent and stimulant properties move sluggish blood and liver congestion that can occur during the cold winter months. As the sun returns, yarrow reminds us to harness that warmth for stimulation and reinvigoration, delivering fresh oxygen and nutrients to the whole system.

Materials

1 c yarrow, dried
½ c rosemary, dried
½ c motherwort, dried
¼ c angelica, dried
¼ c lavender, dried

Method

Simply mix the herbs thoroughly in a bowl. Ensure they are evenly distributed so that each scoop or portion contains a balanced amount of each herb. Place the blend in an airtight container in a cool, dry place away from sunlight to preserve the potency of the herbs. Label the container with the date and contents.

For an incense, burn the herbs over a coal in a heat-safe container in a well-ventilated area.

For a pelvic steam, boil about 2 quarts (or 8 cups) of water. Once the water is boiling, add 1 cup of the herb blend to the pot, then cover and let it steep for about 10 minutes, allowing the herbs to infuse into the water. Carefully pour the herbal infusion into a heat-safe bowl or steaming pot. Place the bowl in a safe place where you can comfortably sit or squat over it, ensuring that you won't burn yourself. Sit over the steam for 20-30 minutes, making sure to stay warm with a blanket around your waist. During this time, relax and focus on your breath. Use this as an opportunity for self-care, visualization, or meditation.

Notes

- Avoid steaming during pregnancy, menstruation, or if you have an active infection.
- For those with heavy menstrual bleeding, use caution with angelica, as it promotes circulation. You may want to reduce its amount or consult with a herbalist before using it in large quantities.

Katie is a mama, herbalist, formulator, and founder of Wild Grace Apothecary where she crafts whole plant botanical skincare. She believes plants have a vital role in our collective embodied awakening and that by rebuilding our relationship with the plants, they can lead us back into relationship with ourselves, one another, and the earth. You can peruse her journal and Wild Grace products at wildgraceapothecary.com

IMBOLC +
STAR ANISE
STARRY NIGHT FIRE SCRYING
BY SAMANTHA BARKER

As the wheel of the year turns towards Imbolc, the stirrings of new life beneath the frozen earth invite us to contemplate the return of the light. Imbolc, traditionally celebrated on February 1st or 2nd, marks the midpoint between winter solstice and spring equinox. It's a time to honor the goddess Brigid and embrace the themes of renewal, rebirth, and life awakening after the long winter's rest.

This festival, steeped in ancient fire rites, is the perfect moment to engage in practices that bridge the darkness and the light—rituals that acknowledge both what we release and what we seek to manifest. One such powerful practice is the Starry Night Fire Scrying Ritual, where the herb star anise becomes a cosmic guide.

Star anise, with its distinct star-shaped pods, carries a potent symbolism. Representing the stars themselves, this celestial herb connects us to the wisdom of the cosmos, inviting us to look beyond the mundane and into the unseen realms. In many traditions, anise has been used for protection, psychic development, and clarity of mind. As its aromatic smoke rises, it carries our intentions to the stars, allowing the herb's essence to amplify our inner sight.

Fire rituals have always played a significant role in Imbolc celebrations. The flames represent purification, transformation, and the life-giving light of the sun returning to the earth. Fire serves as a sacred portal through which we can connect to the divine, release what no longer serves us, and ignite the creative spark within.

In the Starry Night Fire Scrying Ritual, fire becomes the medium through which we scry. The flickering flames, glowing embers, and drifting smoke invite us into a trance-like state where messages from the stars can be revealed. Combined with the essence of star anise, this ritual draws down the cosmic energies, helping us glimpse the mysteries of the universe while grounding ourselves in the practical magic of the earth and beginning to sow seeds that will come to fruition in the coming spring.

The Starry Night Fire Scrying Ritual

To honor Imbolc with the magic of star anise, gather under the night sky or near a window where you can see the stars. In the center of your sacred space, light a small fire in a cauldron or fireproof bowl, surrounding it with black candles and obsidian crystals to invoke the mysteries of the night.

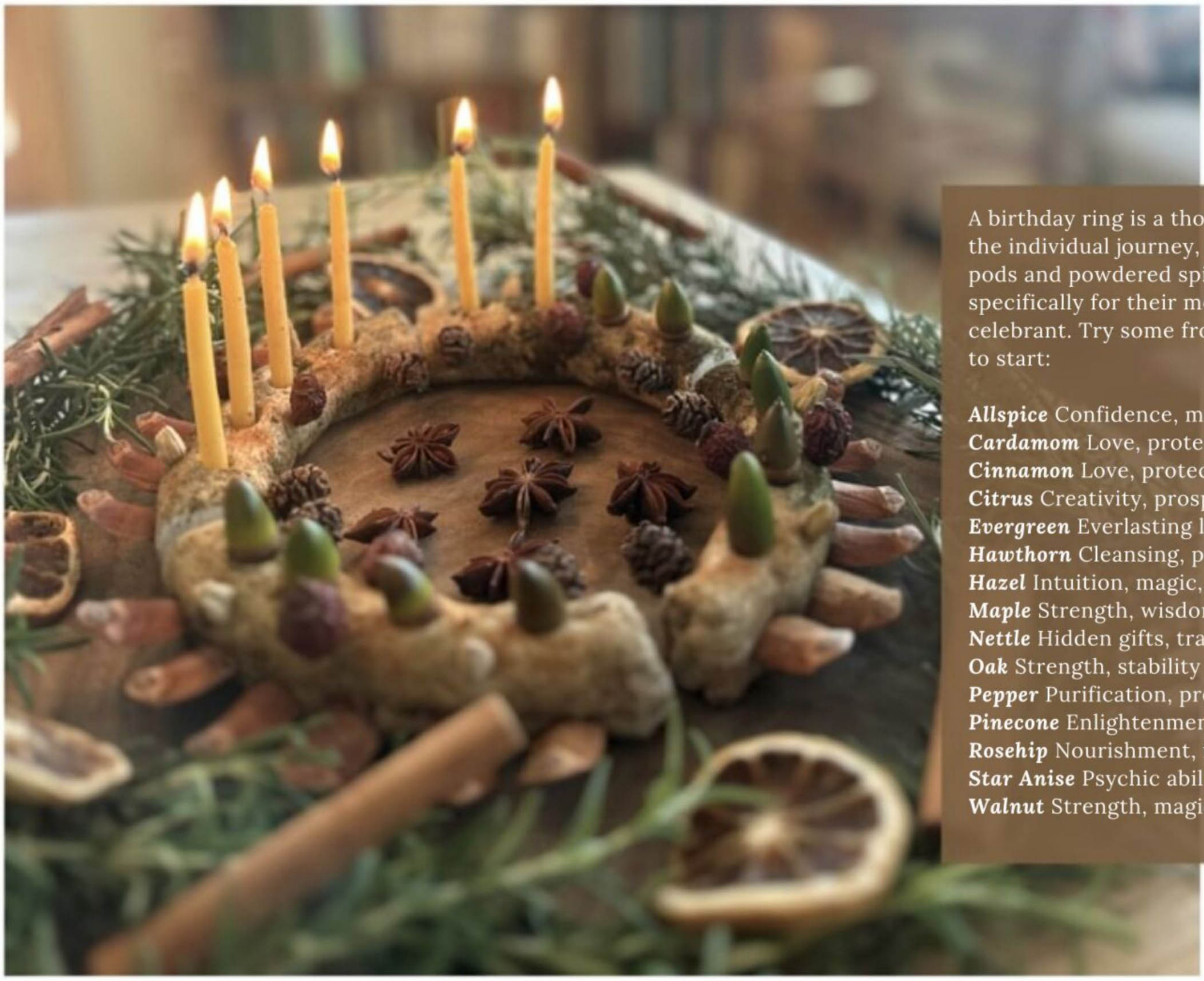
Hold a few star anise pods in your hand, feeling their energy and connection to the stars above. As you invoke the energies of Imbolc and the returning light, toss the pods one by one into the fire. Watch the smoke curl upwards, carrying your intentions with it. The star-like pods burn, releasing their essence into the night, creating a fragrant, mystical atmosphere.

As the flames flicker and dance, soften your gaze and allow yourself to enter a meditative state. Focus on the patterns in the smoke and embers, and allow images, symbols, or thoughts to emerge. This is the art of scrying—opening yourself to receive messages from the unseen realms.

When the fire begins to die down, sit in stillness and reflect on what has come through. What have you released to the flames? What new light has emerged from the darkness?

Samantha Barker is a Witch, Medicine Woman, and owner and creator of Biophilia Apothecary. Samantha is an avid wildcrafter, forager and wild woman with a deep love and devotion to mama earth. Samantha marries the seen with the unseen in her magic offerings as a medicine woman; bridging the gap between the physical and spiritual plains. Follow Samantha at @i.am.samantha.jane and @biophilia_apothecary

WINTER
BIRTHDAY BLESSING
RING
BY ASHLEY MOORE



A birthday ring is a thoughtful way to honor the individual journey, decorated with seed pods and powdered spices that are chosen specifically for their meanings to honor the celebrant. Try some from this list as a place to start:

Allspice Confidence, motivation, luck
Cardamom Love, protection
Cinnamon Love, protection, luck, health
Citrus Creativity, prosperity
Evergreen Everlasting life, rebirth
Hawthorn Cleansing, purification
Hazel Intuition, magic, healing
Maple Strength, wisdom, protection
Nettle Hidden gifts, transformation
Oak Strength, stability
Pepper Purification, protection
Pinecone Enlightenment, rebirth
Rosehip Nourishment, fortitude
Star Anise Psychic abilities, dreams
Walnut Strength, magic

Those with winter birthdays might tell you they often feel their special day is overshadowed by the many holidays of the season. Dedicating time each year for a thoughtful and consistent ritual, completely separate from any other festivities, is especially appreciated. The celebration need not be extravagant or expensive, for it is the sentiment and attention to detail that make a person feel cherished and adored.

This lovingly arranged blessing for a winter birthday combines the messages of the trees and plants with the stabilizing element of earth, an element often associated with death and rebirth.

Plants beautifully demonstrate this circle of life as they spring into being, sprouting out of the ground, growing to full size, and, finally, decaying back into the earth at the end of their life cycles. The final act of decomposing fertilizes the soil, and is the first step in preparing for all new life that is to come. In winter, the earth becomes a womb and a cauldron, a place of incredible alchemy where acorns sleep beneath a blanket of fallen leaves until they are transformed into saplings when the weather warms. Every birthday, we bid farewell to the old version of ourselves, and step into the next phase of learning and loving in our lives. Every birthday is an opportunity to celebrate the personal transformation we’ve made over the course of the year and be reborn.

Materials

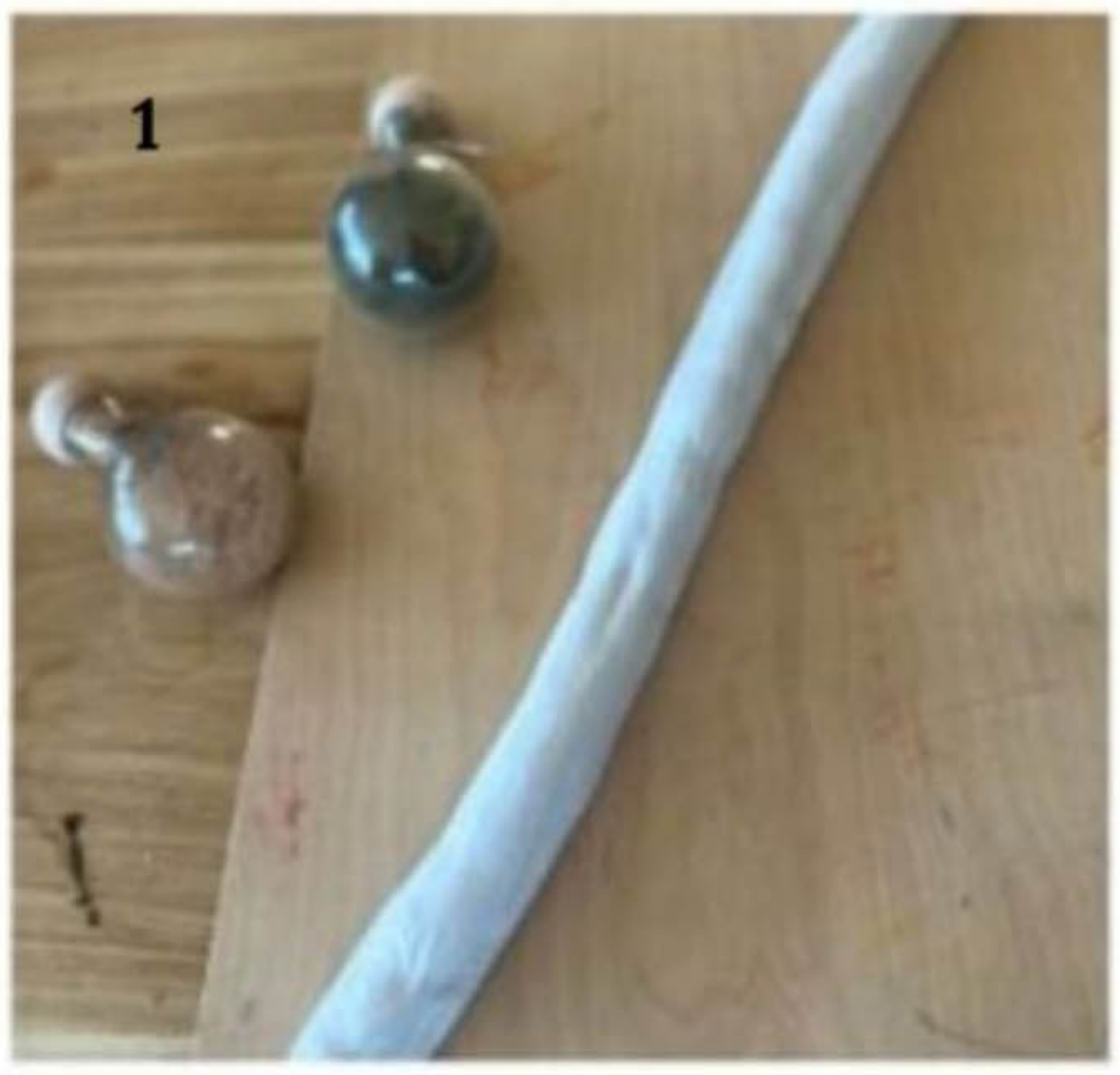
1 ½ lbs air dry clay
Powdered spices of choice
Whole seed pods and whole spices
Dried slices of citrus
Small branches of rosemary or evergreen
Beeswax candles or acorn cap candles

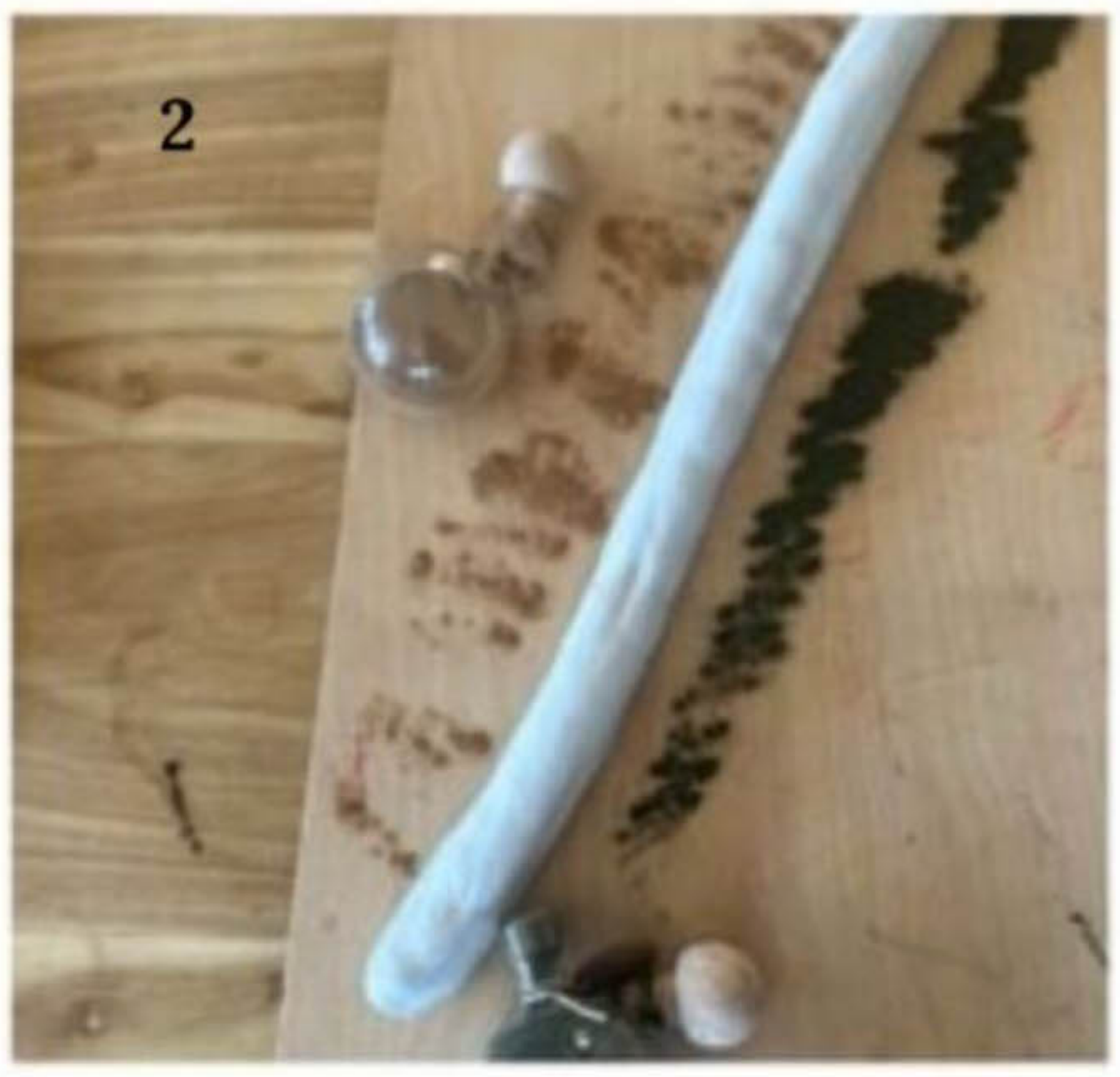
Method

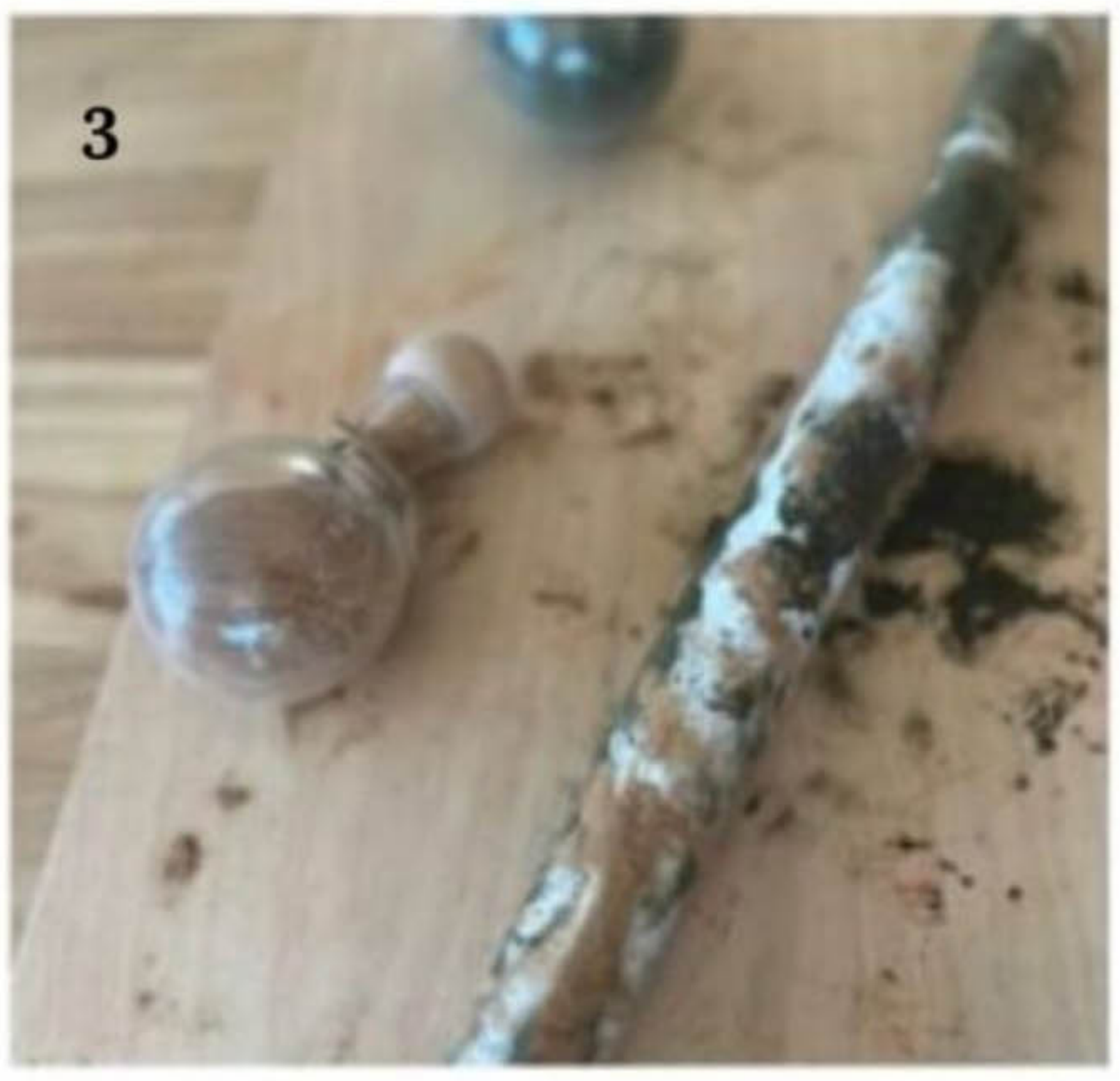
1. Form a large chunk of clay (a little over half of a 2 lb block is a good size) into a ball, then roll it out into a long “snake” approximately 1-1 ½ ” thick.
2. Use the list above to choose which powdered herbs to use, then sprinkle a little over your table or work surface and
3. roll the clay snake in them until it is pretty well coated.
4. Curve the clay snake into a round shape.
5. Use a butter knife to cut the clay across the top in half, making two curved pieces, then cut each of these pieces in half.
6. Using a birthday candle, make four evenly spaced holes in each piece of clay. Wiggle the candle around a bit so that the hole seems just a tad too large. The clay will shrink when it dries, so this step ensures the candles will fit once the ring is dry. This will be a good-sized hole to fit birthday candles as well as acorn cap candles.
7. Push pinecone scales into the clay, all along the outer edge.
8. Gather the seed pods you’ve chosen and use some of them to further decorate the ring, if you’d like, by pushing them into the clay. Allow the ring to dry, then further decorate the ring with greenery, dried citrus slices, and more seed pods.

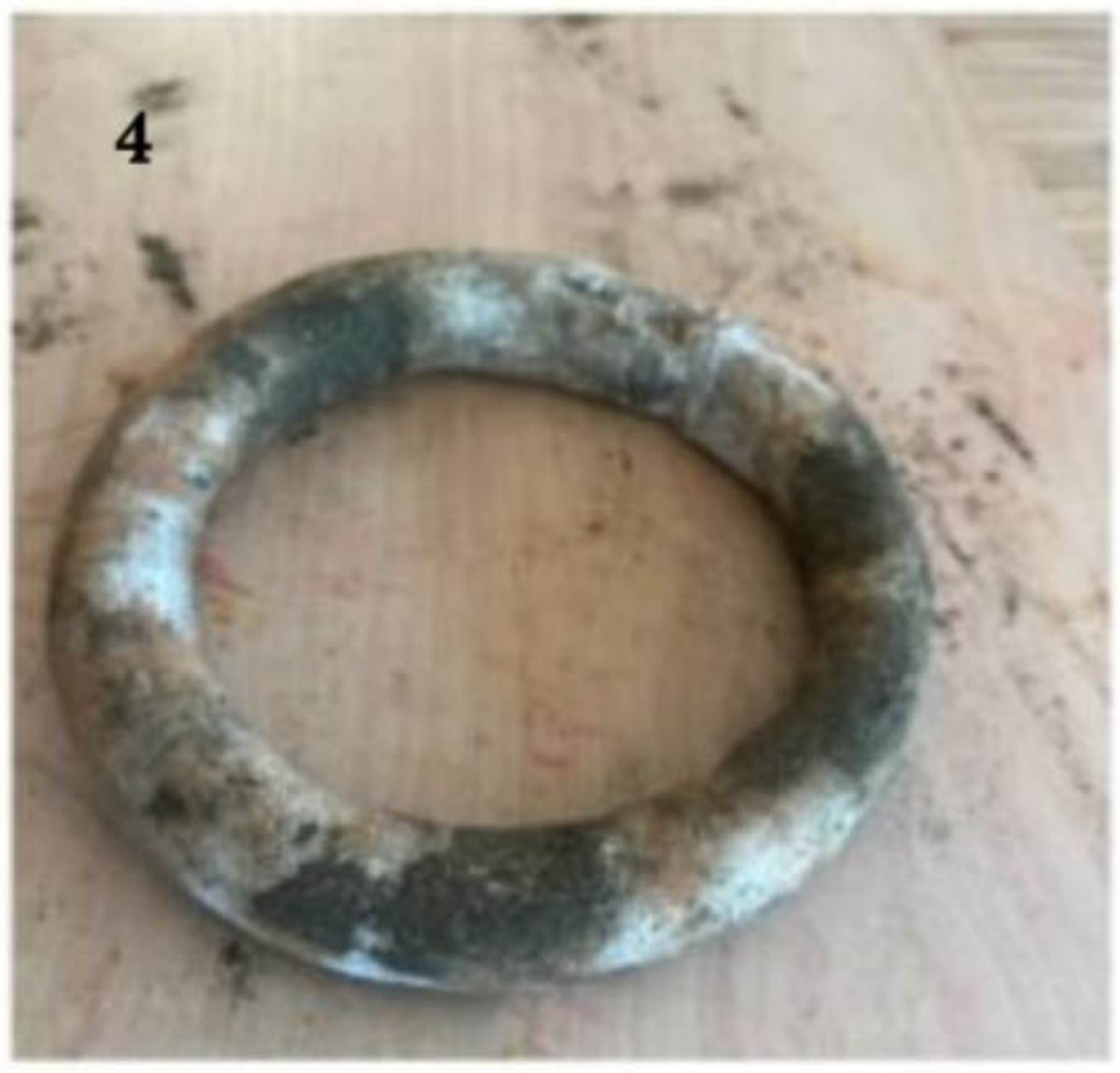
Notes

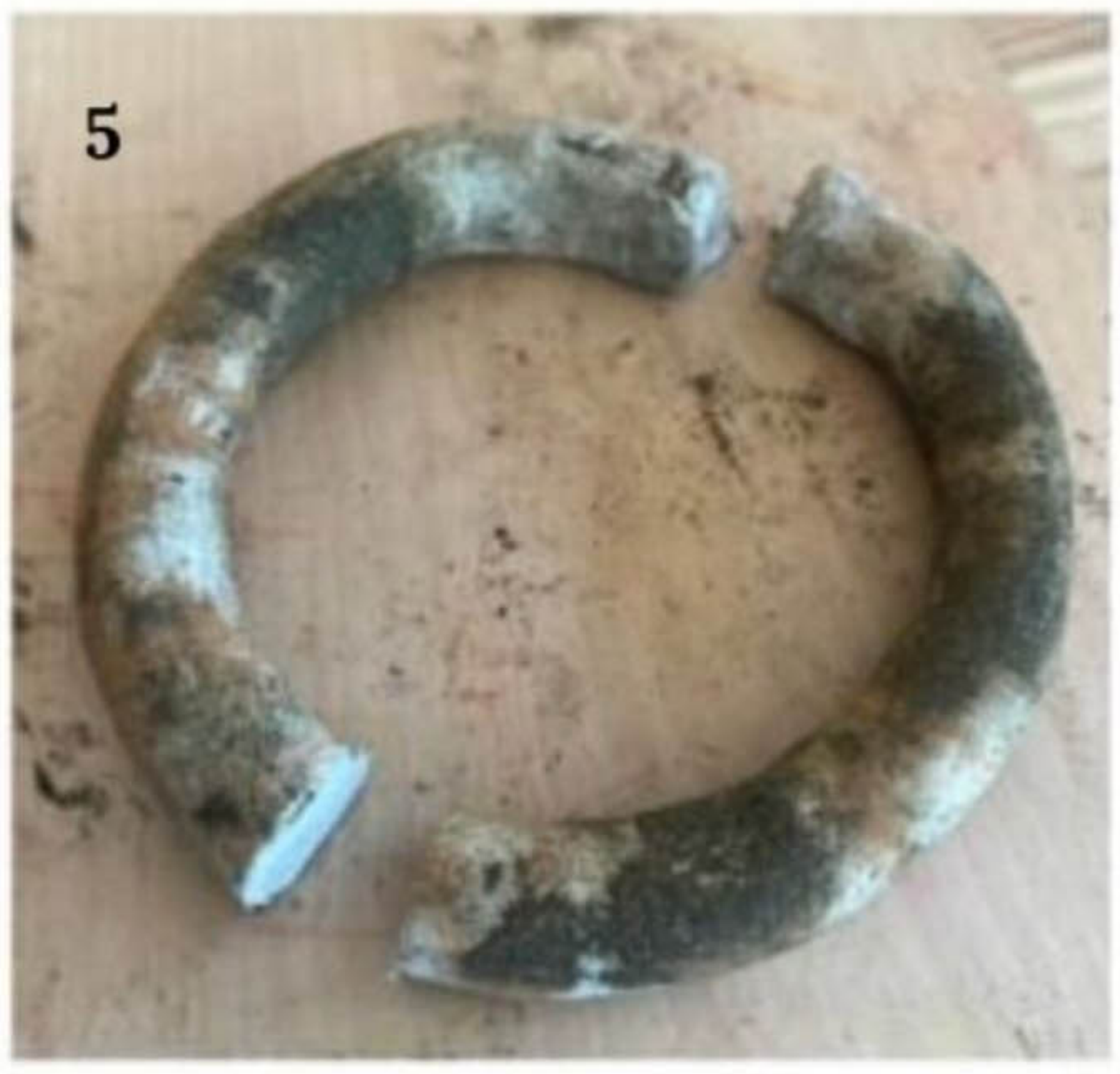
- This ring could also be used as a countdown calendar for the Winter Solstice or any other event, by filling the holes with acorns 16 days before the event and replacing an acorn with a candle each evening.

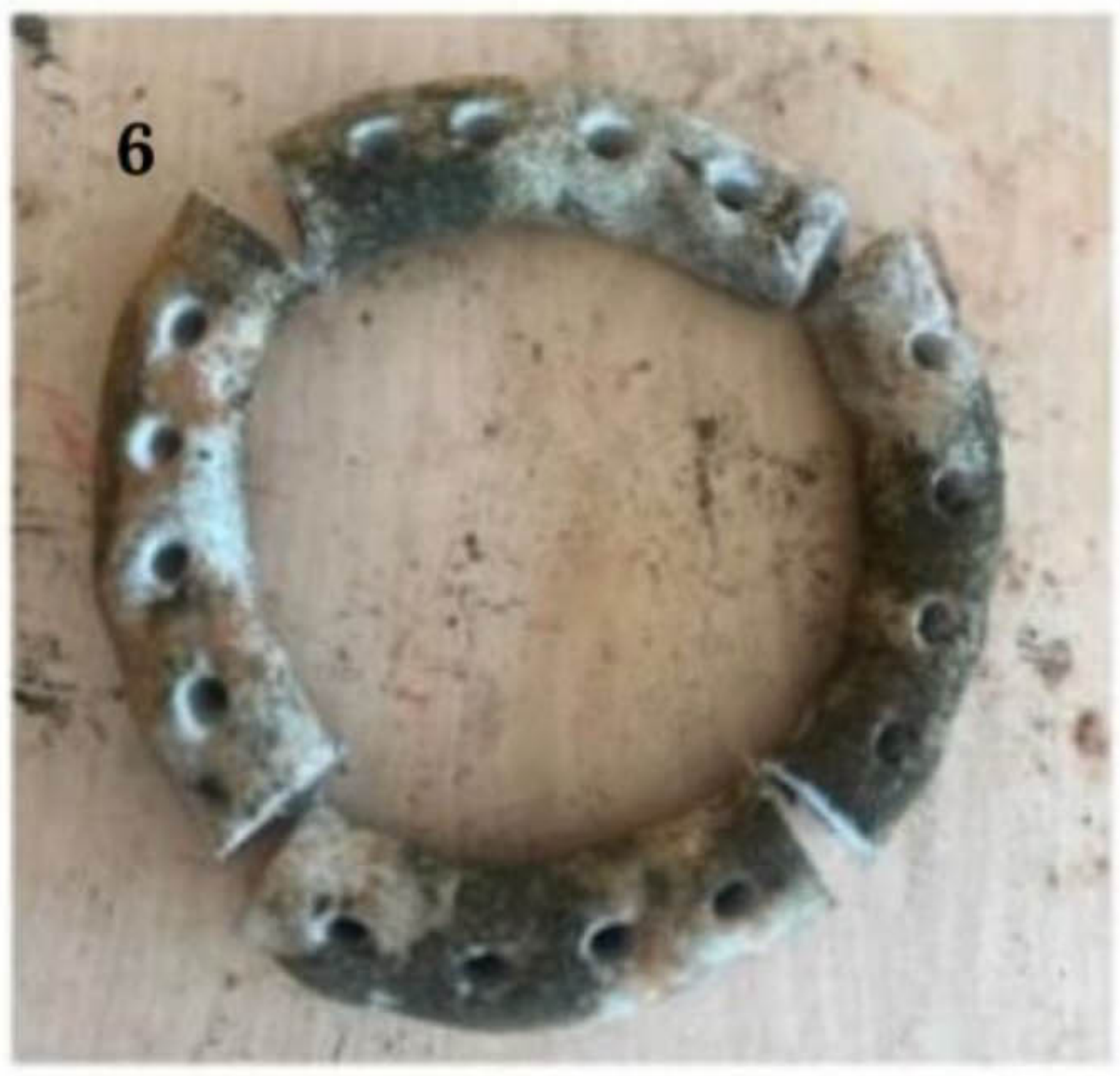


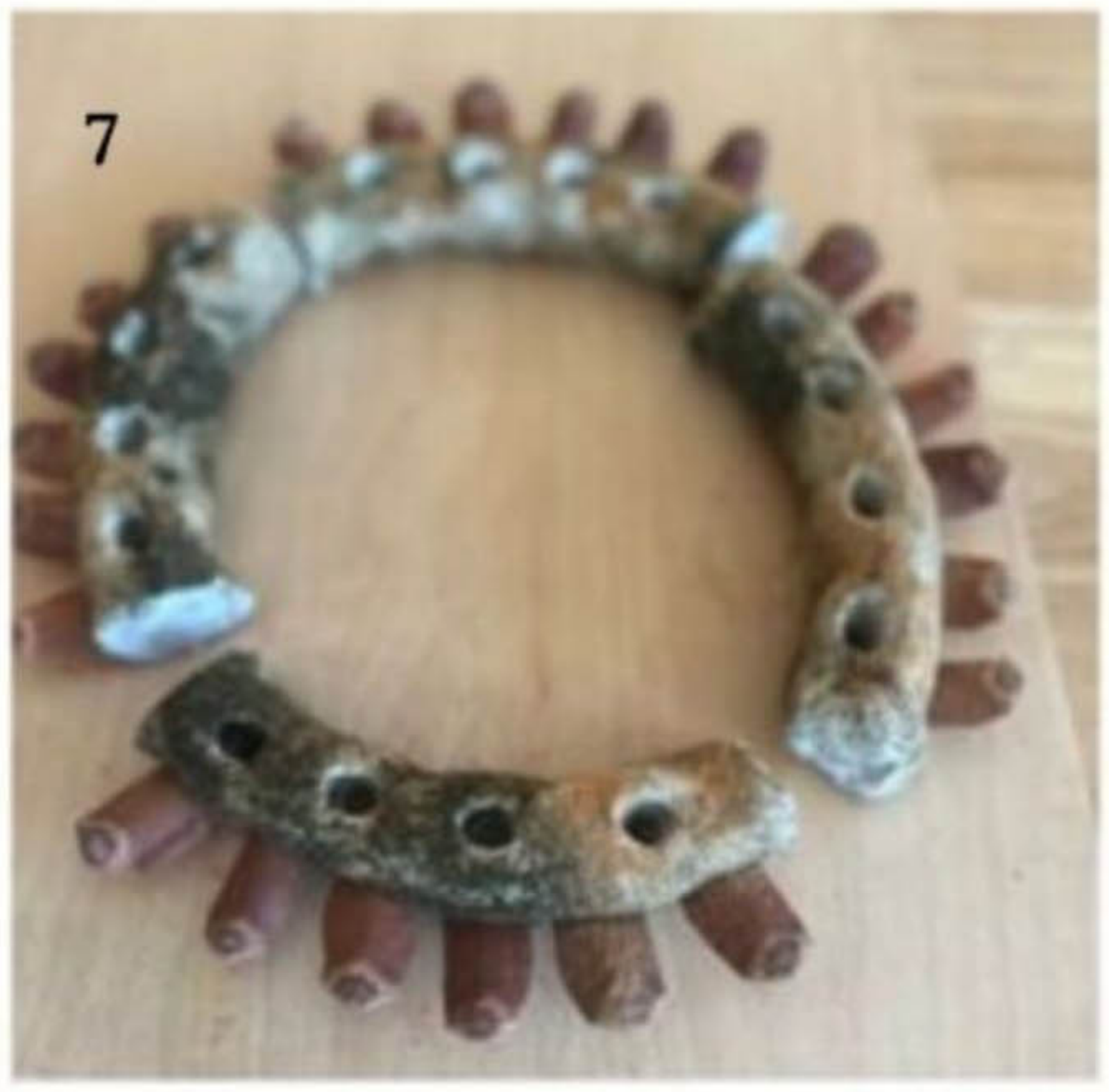


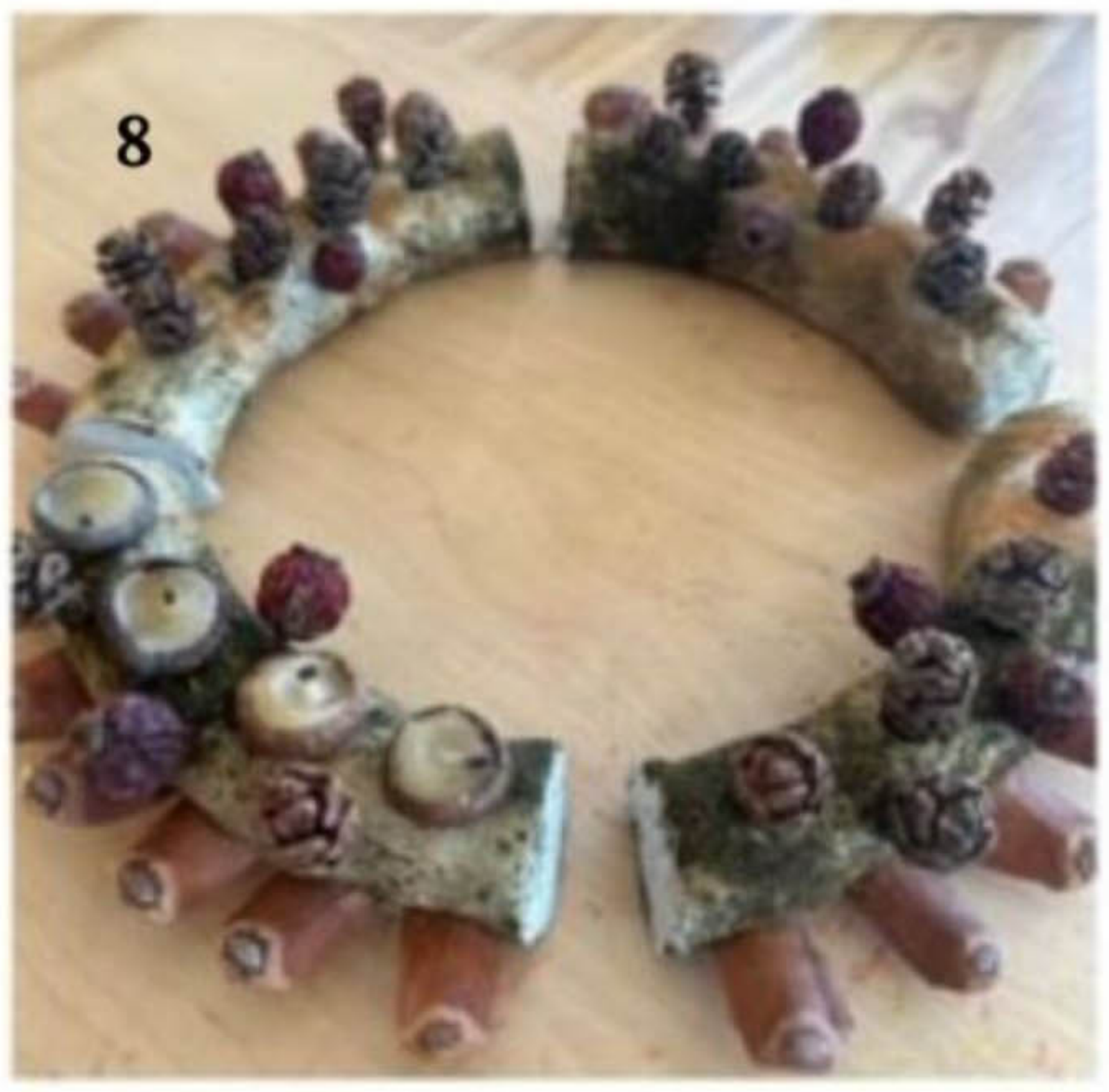












Ritual

Arrange the birthday ring on the table, either in the center or at the birthday person's spot.

Place one candle per year or decade in the ring, and fill the other spots with small fir cones, seed pods, or acorns.

Sing or say a blessing for the celebrant, such as:
"We celebrate dear (Judah)'s birth
And (10) whole years here on this Earth
You made this journey from the stars
And landed in these arms of ours
You've grown so much year after year
And we are grateful that you're here!"

The birthday person then makes a wish, and blows out the candles.

Ashley lives an ordinary, magical life by the sea. Find her in her books, The Women's Heritage Sourcebook (Rizzoli, 2020), The Children's Heritage Sourcebook (Rizzoli, 2023), and Reverent Rhythm: Walking the Wheel with a Gentle Heart (self-published, 2024); at her store, Heritage Goods & Supply heritagegoodsandsupply.com in Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, and Solvang; and on social media @motherhestia

NEW YEAR MANIFESTATION JARS

BY HARMONIE O’LOUGHLIN

Creating New Year’s resolutions can feel daunting and downright restrictive. Often they are born from unsustainable pressures to make a fresh start with the turn of the calendar. And it is as good a time as any, but we might not always be ready for those big changes we place on ourselves. While creating a goal for a single year seems attainable, 365 days is actually a long time to maintain the highest of ideals.

For a fresh take on New Year's traditions, create a manifestation jar as a visual and symbolic way to encourage intentions you want to bring forth in the days ahead. By placing herbs in a jar to display, you allow yourself to think broadly about what is most important in your life at this moment and how you can foster growth without laying on the pressure. It allows you to think in terms of energetics rather than specifics, such as encouraging wellness rather than losing 10 pounds or attracting love rather than having a new partner by March.

Plant symbolism has developed and endured throughout history through myth, literature, art, herbalism, and religion. Herbs took on meaning based on interpretations from humans on how they look, taste and feel, how they behave in the natural world and how they respond in the body when taken medicinally. Examine plants that call to you and see how their meanings align with your goals.

To make a manifestation jar, find an aesthetically-pleasing vessel. It could be as simple as a canning jar or as ornate as a vintage tea cup or a glass candle holder. Layer your chosen base(s) on the bottom and rest your herbs and other adornments on top. Make sure all materials are dry so mold does not grow in your jar. As you place each object, think about what you are calling into your life, setting your purpose.

A manifestation jar can be put on an altar, but it doesn’t even have to be that consecrated. You can leave it on a windowsill or on a desk, a place where you will often see it to remind you to think about and embody the symbolism of your chosen plants.

Check in with the jar on regular intervals or incorporate it in new moon rituals where you reaffirm your intentions. Add or subtract materials, as needed, so that it continues to align with your soul’s work.

Herbs

Acorn Potential, resilience
Basil Prosperity, courage
Blackberry Thorn Boundaries, resilience
Calendula Optimism, clairvoyance
Cardamom Love, lust
Chamomile Prosperity, success
Cinnamon Love, prosperity
Comfrey Healing, safety
Dill Wealth, intelligence
Elder Protection, wisdom
Fennel Grounding, courage
Garlic Protection, purification
Goldenrod Optimism, new beginnings
Hawthorn Renewal, fertility
Hibiscus Passion, harmony
Lavender Peace, love
Lemon Balm Self love, pleasantry
Linden Truth, marital love
Marshmallow Beneficence, good fortune
Mint Virtue, purification
Mugwort Protection, manifestation
Nettle Protection, cleansing
Oregano Peace, happiness
Red Clover Luck, success
Rose Love, loyalty
Rosemary Remembrance, protection
Sage Wisdom, clarity
Thyme Courage, ambition
Tulsi Perseverance, virtue
Violet Simplicity, serenity

Other Adornments

Coins Prosperity
Crystals Learn about individual meanings
Feathers Hope, divine, flight
Ribbon Learn about individual colors

Choose a Base

Coffee Action, liberation
Corn Sustenance, fertility
Oats Fertility, prosperity
Pebbles Strength, stability
Peppercorn Motivation, endurance
Rice Fertility, good health
Seeds abundance, growth
Soil Growth, grounding
Salt Protection, purifying
Sand Change, renewal
Wheat Abundance, rebirth

Combinations

Career Basil, chamomile, sage, thyme, tulsi
Fertility Goldenrod, hawthorn, mugwort
Growth Acorn, elder, lemon balm, thyme
Love Rose, hibiscus, cinnamon, linden, mint
Reformer Blackberry thorn, coffee, lavender, rosemary
Wellness Coffee, comfrey, nettle

PERLLAN
APPLE
FOR HEN GALEN

BY LARA WATKINS

Hen Galen is a tradition celebrated in some parts of rural Wales that dates back to 1752, the year that Britain changed from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar. *Hen Galen* translates to "Old New Year," a reference to the fact that this celebration traditionally takes place on January 13th which is when the New Year previously fell according to the Julian calendar.

The switch to the Gregorian calendar was met with some resentment for religious reasons and more simply because people felt like they were losing 11 days. To make the adjustment from one calendar system to the next it was decided that Wednesday, September 2, 1752 would be followed by Thursday, September 14, 1752!

Some villages in Wales were quite determined to stick with the Julian calendar's New Year's Day celebration, though, and so the January 13th celebrations have continued, in some villages, to this day.

Perllan apples are a key feature in this simple New Year's Day custom. A perllan is a good luck charm created from an apple decorated with evergreens and cloves or nuts. Three sticks are inserted into the apple so that it can stand on show in people's windows. Smaller cones from trees such as alder or larch are well-proportioned for decorating the apples. Beech nuts and acorns would also work. Small sprigs of evergreens such as holly, bay leaves and box were traditionally used.

Children decorated their apples before carrying them around the village to collect calennig. The word *calennig* translates into English as "New Year's gift" or "New Year's celebration." Children would call from house to house carrying their perllans and reciting rhymes or singing songs at doorways in exchange for gifts, a little similar to trick or treating. Calennig were often sweet treats or coins, but bread and cheese was also welcomed. It is said that all calennig must be collected before midday. Any attempts after this could be refused safely, but prior to midday, refusing to welcome visitors could result in a year of bad luck!

Despite the rush to collect callenig before midday and the threat of bad luck if you did not welcome the children calling at your door, the tradition was in fact a very social affair with plenty of well wishes and sharing of food and treats. Initially a tradition that was an act of resistance to change, Hen Galen continues to bring communities together to celebrate.

Even if you don't go collecting callenig, perllan apples make a lovely winter decor and seasonal nature project that can be displayed once the holiday decorations come down.

Calennig Song

"Blwyddyn Newydd Dda i chi
Ac i bawb sydd yn y tŷ.
Dyma fy nymuniad i,
Blwyddyn Newydd Dda i chi."

Happy New Year to you
And to all in your house.
Here is my wish for you
Happy New Year to you.

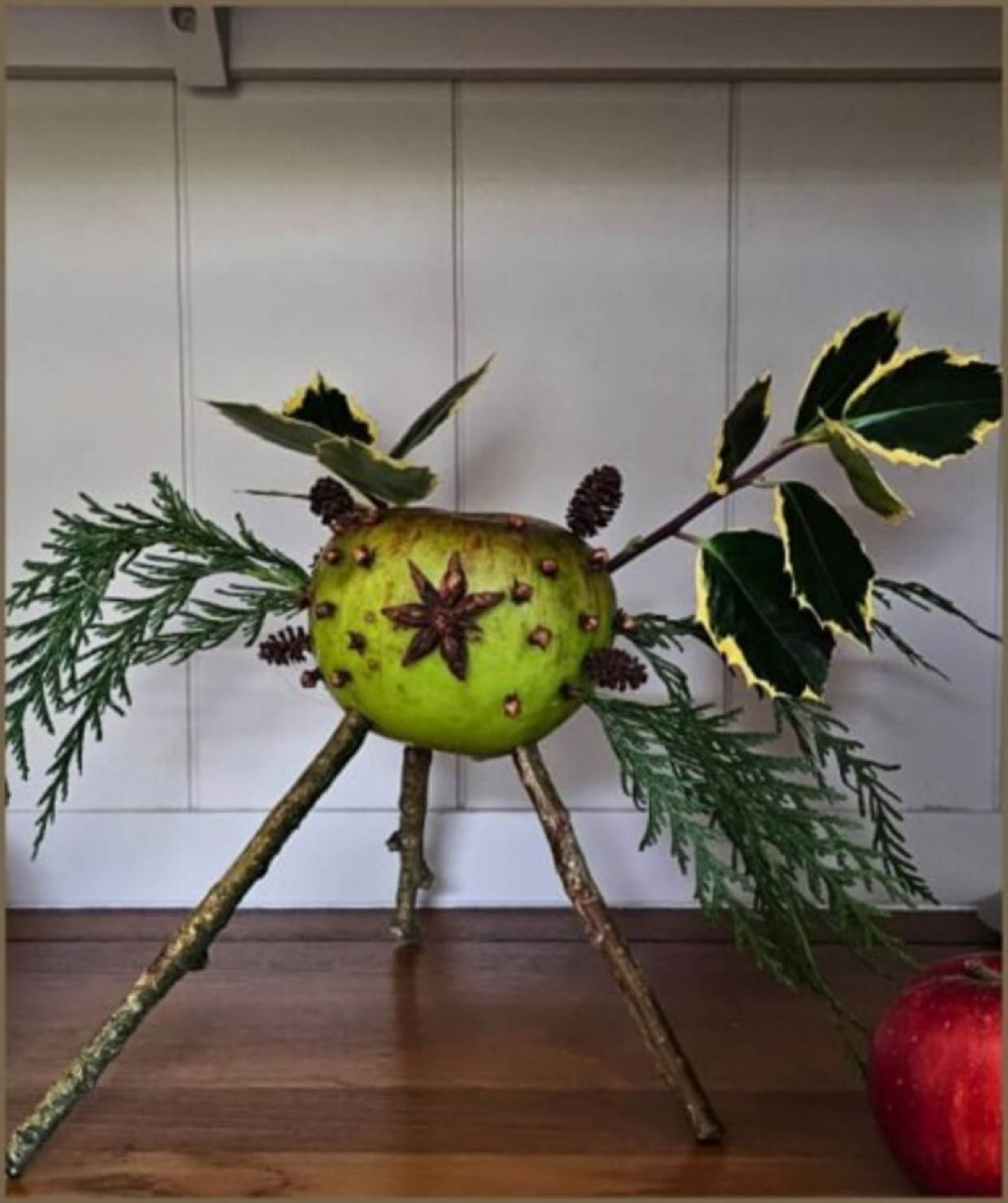
Materials

Apples
Twigs of similar lengths
Cloves
Star Anise
Small pinecones
Nuts
Evergreen branches

Method

Take 3 three twigs of similar length and insert them into your apple so that the apple is sitting on a twig tripod. Take care not to split the apple when inserting the twig legs.

Decorate with cloves, star anise, nuts, and small evergreen branches.



Lara is a forager, home herbalist and community garden advocate. She lives in a beautiful spot deep in the hills of mid Wales with plenty of woods & quiet country lanes to forage in. See what she gets up to on Instagram @herbsfromthehills

CACAO + CARDAMOM

LOVE TRUFFLES

BY ROSEMARY LOVESMITH

Love Truffles offer a harmonious blend of heart-opening cacao paired with herbs traditionally known to nurture passion and intimacy such as ashwagandha, cardamom, maca, and damiana. Coated in the raw richness of cacao and topped with rose petals, these truffles celebrate the connection between plants and people, between body and spirit. They make for the perfect Valentine's Day gift, whether for a beloved or as an act of self-love.

For generations, cacao (*Theobroma cacao*) has been revered as more than just food; it's medicine for the heart. Cacao is lovingly revered for its ability to bring people closer together by fostering deeper connections, both with ourselves and with those we love.

As an adaptogenic herb, ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) has been used for centuries to support calm and balance. It's a root that gently holds us, reminding us to slow down, making it perfect for grounding moments of connection with others.

Cardamom (*Elettaria cardamomum*) brings warmth and sweetness, both in flavor and action. Traditionally used as an aphrodisiac, it kindles the fire of love by promoting circulation and awakening the senses. Cardamom's soft, warming nature helps clear emotional stagnation, making way for tenderness and joy to flow freely.

Often associated with love potions and sensual tonics, damiana (*Turnera diffusa*) is a classic aphrodisiac that works on both the mind and body. It's traditionally used to promote relaxation and uplift the spirit, opening the heart to connection and deepening intimacy. Damiana invites playfulness, and a sense of ease in relationships.

A gift from the high Andes, maca (*Lepidium meyenii*) is all about energy and vitality. Traditionally used to enhance stamina, it supports both physical and emotional endurance, while its revitalizing properties encourage us to show up fully in our relationships.

Rose (*Rosa spp.*) is a nervine and heart tonic, helping soothe the nervous system and uplifting mood. Energetically, rose fosters connection, deepens relationships, and promotes emotional healing, making it a powerful ally for heart-centered communication.

Together, these plants create more than a moment of indulgence—they create an opportunity to honor the heart, the spirit, and the love that grows when we align with nature's wisdom. Each bite is a reminder of the plant's ability to support us, nourishing both body and soul with timeless magic.

Filling Materials

2 tbsp ashwagandha powder
1 tbsp cardamom powder
2 tbsp damiana powder
2 tbsp maca powder
1 tbsp rose powder
½ cup cashew butter or other nut butter
¼ c raw honey

Coating Materials

4 oz raw cacao paste
¼ c coconut sugar, finely ground
Rose petals or other edible flowers for garnish

Method

Combine the powdered herbs with the cashew butter and honey, stirring until smooth and well combined. Roll the mixture into small truffles and set aside.

For the coating, chop the cacao paste into smaller chunks and heat over a double broiler to slowly melt. Once melted, add in the coconut sugar and stir until it is incorporated. Using a fork or toothpick, carefully dip each truffle into the cacao coating. Working quickly, garnish with dried rose petals before the coating sets.

Notes

- If you have trouble finding pure cacao, use high-quality dark chocolate with at least 60% cacao instead of the cacao and coconut sugar coating.
- They are best stored in the refrigerator or freezer.

Rosemary is a clinical herbalist, beekeeper, teacher, and founder of Forest And Ether LLC, where she and her husband craft gourmet herbal medicines. She believes that we all have the power to use food as medicine and that herbs should be incorporated into every meal. Explore her journal and Forest And Ether products at forestandether.com or on Instagram @forestandether

Viewpoint

Interviews + Reviews

Maria Ilves

MEET
CONNIE BYERS

BY HARMONIE O'LOUGHLIN

Tell us about Byers Ranch Homestead!
The Byers Ranch Homestead is a 36-acre paradise nestled among the ponderosa pines, perched on a mountain at just below 8,000 ft in Southwest Colorado. We forage food and medicinals from our land, raise our own chickens, and have a 3,000-square-foot terraced garden, seasonal spring, and breathtaking mountain views.

How have you cultivated a relationship with your land?
One of the most important parts of our homestead is how we manage our property. We have been intentional stewards of the land from the beginning, using only regenerative, sustainable, and organic practices. It has been a true joy to watch the land evolve, with new species of plants and animals arriving each year as we allow the land to return to nature.

How do you cultivate habitat for wild plants on your property?
Our land beyond the garden is untouched and wild, aside from necessary fire mitigation and essential pathways. We use sustainable harvesting practices, always working to ensure the native habitat and diverse ecosystem of our land is allowed to live "as nature intended." Even inside the garden boundaries, there are no "weeds." We allow medicinal plants to grow unharassed inside and outside the garden beds.

When did you embark on your goal to produce enough food to sustain your family for a year, and what is your current progress toward achieving it?
This has been our goal all along, but I now know it will take patience, experience, and Mother Nature's cooperation to achieve. In our first year, we produced enough food for four months. In our second year, poor weather conditions led to a small harvest. This year, we had well/water issues and lost a lot of crops due to drought. So, let's just say it's a work in progress!

How do you manage the workload of growing your own food and medicine while earning an income from other endeavors?
Luckily for me, I'm able to bring in an income while being self-employed and working remotely from our homestead. A typical day for me involves doing client work online and taking breaks to forage or garden whenever I need a pause.

What plant knowledge has been passed down from your Hispanic lineage?
My grandmother was a kitchen herbalist, and I remember learning to make home remedies from the spice rack from a young age. Her lemon, cinnamon, clove, and nutmeg tea is still standard winter cold and flu remedy in the homes of my family.

How do indigenous plant species star in your products?
I use juniper, ponderosa pine, yarrow, rosehips, and osha in many of my formulations, often utilizing them in the same manner that local tribes have used them for centuries. Though not indigenous to Colorado, I also feature wild foraged yarrow, plantain, and mullein.

How does your Native American heritage factor into your work with plants?
I always feel tied to my ancestors when I use a plant in the same manner that they would have used it. It gives me a special bond and reverence for each herbal ally. I often work with osha root, which is tied heavily to the Navajo (Dinéh) tribe, and it evokes so much peace for me as I prepare each formulation.

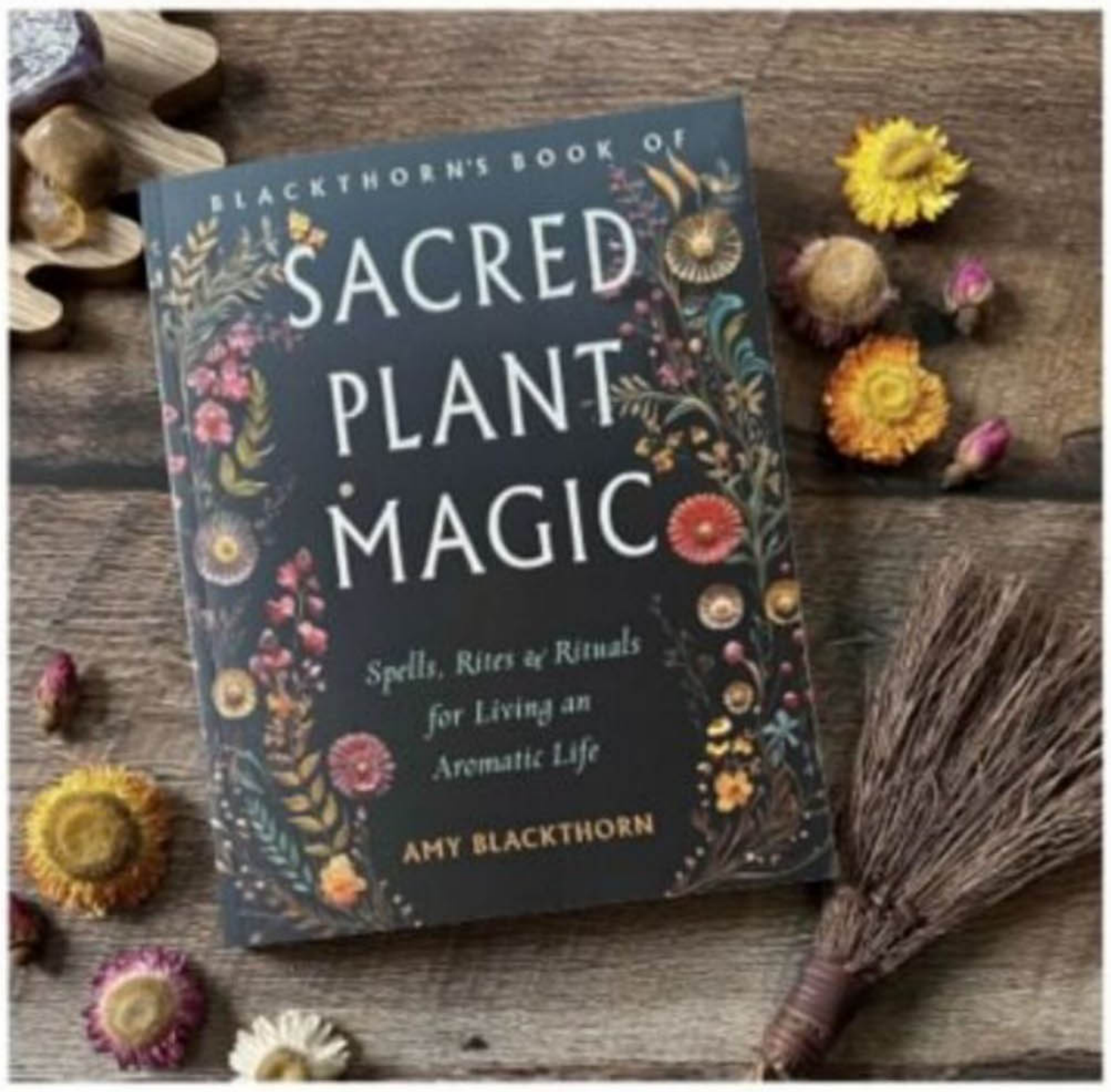
What ancestral herbs most often make it to your kitchen table?
That would definitely be juniper. I use the berries in teas, meat rubs, cocktails, and my version of homemade gin. Juniper ash (culinary ash) is also a staple in most Navajo kitchens. It is an essential ingredient in the tribe's traditional corn dishes, such as blue corn mush, a breakfast staple.

Connie is passionate about working with indigenous plants and teaching others the value of foraging. She can be found with her husband on their Colorado homestead, growing food, foraging herbs, or making products for her botanical brand, Byers Ranch Apothecary. Learn more on her website, thisunboundlife.com, or Instagram, @thisunboundlife.blog

BLACKTHORN'S BOOK OF SACRED PLANT MAGIC

Amy Blackthorn is a well known author in the realm of botanical magic, but her newest installment takes an interestingly unique approach. Filled to the brim with folklore, ritual, and practical information, this book explores the spiritual side of the apothecary. From flower essences to intention oils, plant spirit connection to botanical divination, much of this deep dive takes place through the lens of scent. Especially intriguing is the concept of sortilege divination with essential oils, where the querent blindly chooses between oils, in the manner of drawing a tarot card, then references this book to learn the deeper symbolism tied to that botanical scent. There are many other ways to find meaning and connection through plant aromas; Blackthorn shares recipes, exercises, correspondences and rituals to that effect, along with detailed plant profiles that highlight quite unique characteristics and perspectives. This book will be of interest if you are looking to explore aromatic plants, flower essences, and aromatherapy more deeply!

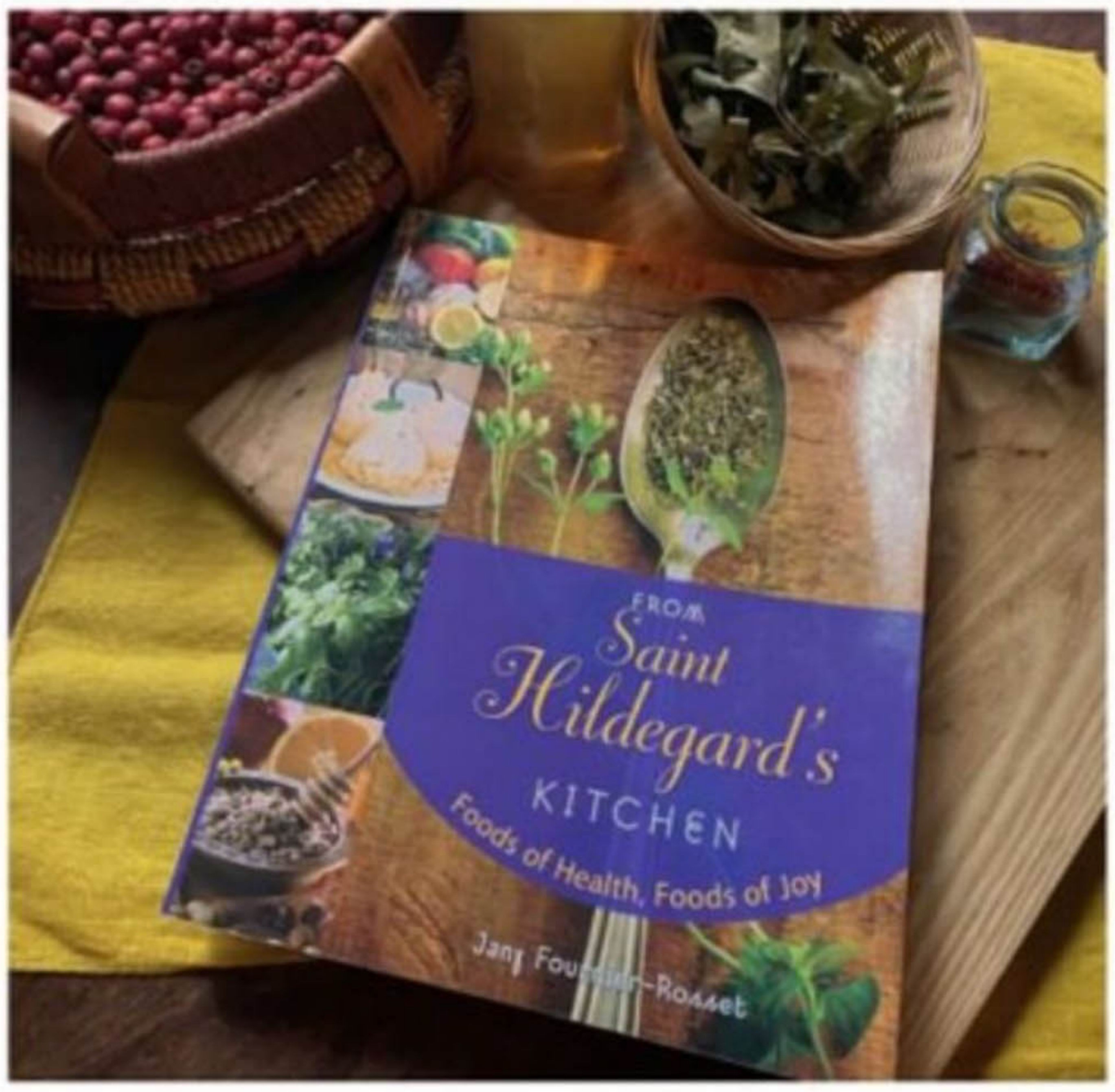
-Anna Reisz



FROM SAINT HILDEGARD'S KITCHEN

Food is medicine. And if you are looking for a legitimate cookbook that integrates nourishment with natural medicine, look no further than From Saint Hildegard's Kitchen. Saint Hildegard of Bingen was a twelfth-century Benedictine Abbess whose work as an herbalist, physician, and cook transcends her astonishing range of talents, including mystic, naturalist, visionary and composer, and serves well beyond her religious affiliation. This cookbook was curated by renowned French Chef Jany Fournier-Rosset and includes an original selection of delicious recipes steeped in holistic nutrition, based on the writings and teachings of Hildegard. There are over 175 nutritious recipes from herbal elixirs to simple jams, chestnut soufflé to anti-nausea cookies, and her special bread-making instructions which proselytize spelt. Each recipe lists its medicinal ingredients with materia medica-type explanations, making it a kind of hybrid herbalism textbook. If kitchen herbalism is an area of interest for you, this book deserves a spot in your collection.

-Leah Jorgensen Jean



MEET
KATHLEEN PERILLO
BY HARMONIE O'LOUGHLIN

Kathleen Perillo, founding member of the Center for Ecodynamic Restoration (CEDR), started her career as a naturalist and environmental educator. She taught for 25 years at Clark College in Environmental Science where she co-founded the Clark College Native Plant Center. Currently she devotes most of her time to CEDR projects. Find out more at cedrestoration.org

How has your path led you to focus on sustainability and conservation?
I focused on conservation biology and wildlife ecology during my college and graduate studies. This led me to internships and jobs in the field of conservation and sustainability. I am in love with the earth and want to do all I can to protect it and to share what I know with others in hopes that they too will cherish it by living sustainably.

Tell us about the work of the Center for Ecodynamic Restoration (CEDR)!
CEDR seeks to educate people about ecological restoration by engaging them in all types of restoration activities. We work on restoration projects on the Washington side of the Columbia River Gorge and in the northern California Klamath Mountain foothills. Central to our restoration efforts are our partnerships with state and federal agencies as well as schools and other non-profits.

Describe your soil regeneration efforts.
I am a big fan of composting food scraps and using them for soil fertility in my garden. Mulching is a water conservation technique and also a great way to give soils a fighting chance in human managed landscapes. But mostly by removing non-native plants and replacing them with a thriving site-appropriate native community, I feel we are doing the best thing possible for soil regeneration.

What plants are most commonly utilized in your work?
This depends on where I am working because NATIVE plants are the only plants I use. I visit legacy parcels near the sites we are restoring to see what grows in an intact system (one that hasn't been grazed, logged or otherwise altered). From there I choose pollinator favorites. One pollinator favorite, native to where I work in Washington and California, is Varileaf Phacelia (*Phacelia heterophylla*). The bumblebees cannot resist it!

What can individuals do in their community to carry on this work?
Get involved with community organizations doing restoration work. Community nonprofits, land trusts, wildlife groups, etc. You will be inspired by the people you meet and the work they are doing. This often leads to more opportunities for you to become involved.

How can homeowners be stewards of their land?
Learn what plants are native to your region and plant them. All states have native plant societies, many with excellent websites to help you choose site appropriate plants and often with links to local native plant sales. Participate in Homegrown National Park, the movement that helps people learn about and plant natives at their own homes. Celebrate "plant birthdays" when your native plants bloom!

How can we promote biodiversity in our kitchens?
The most important thing we can do is eliminate food waste. Discarded food accounts for 58% of the methane released into the atmosphere from landfills. Methane is a potent climate changing gas. We can do better! Compost non-edible food scraps and get creative with left-overs. Soups are great for leftovers. You can also put your leftover ingredients into a web search to find delish recipes.

Is it still true that local over organic is the most sustainable choice?
Both local and organic is my preference. If local food is coming from small diversified farms that don't use synthetic pesticides then local is still the more sustainable option. But chemical inputs must be considered because they don't just impact the food, but the surrounding land and water as well.

What is your favorite, long anticipated meal for each season?
For winter, I look forward to butternut squash soup and bread pudding. In spring I love dandelion noodles and nettle pesto; the joy increased by getting to forage for the ingredients. In summer I relish simple fresh salads with whatever the garden is providing at the time – peas, cucumbers and tomatoes are anticipated with gusto. And in fall I anticipate root vegetable casseroles and apple crisps.

OLD WAYS FOR THE NEW AGE

Coming out of sunny Australia and run by naturopath, folk herbalist, practicing pagan, and ritual lover Hannah Forest, Old ways for the New Age podcast is just that. It touches on and combines traditional ways of living with a modern twist, encompassing witchcraft, herbalism, and slow living. It amplifies local voices and shares grassroots viewpoints, promoting how we can connect deeply with the natural world and empowering us to cultivate relationships with plants. Hannah both conducts interviews and hosts solo episodes covering witchcraft for kids, astrology, astroherbalism, and community herbalism. Podcast episodes are released monthly and they are of interest to those fascinated in listening to conversations with change makers who step lightly on the earth. It is well worth a listen and you might even catch a little Aussie humor.

-Bec McGuire

SOULTHENTIC

Dive into being authentic to your soul with Dr. Linh Love on her podcast, Southentic. With kindness and truth, she teaches you how to feel your feelings by shifting your energy. There is darkness in between the love and light, and coming to terms with that darkness is a part of healing trauma. Dr. Love and her co-hosts discuss how to embrace your true self and heal. From chefs to gardeners to reiki practitioners, her guests help spread the message via a wide variety of topics from food and herbs to ancestral healing and astrology. These wellness modalities, especially discussions on topics like Chinese medicine and breathwork, show deeply interesting facets of holistic mind-body healing. Dr. Love explores how our inner world reflects the world around us. This is a podcast for those who want to grow spiritually through a visionary's words!

-Jennifer Mayfield

SOULTHENTIC
PODCAST
WITH DR. LINH LOVE

MEET
REBECCA FILS-AIME

When did you first fall in love with plants?
I have early memories of playing in my grandma's front yard with my older sister, and mashing up plants and grass to make "medicine." I couldn't have been more than 6 or 7 years old at the time. I'm blessed to come from a culture (Haiti) that emphasizes using plants for wellness and consumption so it's always been around me. My grandparents have grown food all my life and my mother also has a few fruit trees and medicinal plants growing around her house. She used to make this immune-boosting Haitian remedy, which was honey infused with ginger, onion, garlic, and cloves.

What is your favorite plant and why?
Hibiscus; It's the national flower of Haiti and because of how it's most commonly used in the Caribbean, I associate it with holidays, celebration, and quality time with friends and family.

How do you most incorporate plants into your lifestyle?
By eating them. I'm big on using food as "medicine" and for most plants, the easiest way to get the most out of them is by consuming them whole. I most commonly incorporate them into soups, broths, seasoning blends, marinades, sauces, jams, drinks, salads, salad dressings, and infuse them into honey or vinegar.

What is your current inspiration when working with plants?
In the winter season, I find it important to bring it a bit of brightness into my life to fight the seasonal blues. I love grapefruit for this - it's in season but the bright acidity is reminiscent of the summer. I like to eat it raw with a bit of honey or use it in winter desserts.

What do you find meaningful about Plant Wonder Collective that adds to your life and work?
It's amazing to be able to come together with like-minded people and "nerd out" collectively about plants I love. I study a different plant every month on my own, so it's cool to be part of a group that is essentially doing the same thing.

What do you love about Botanical Anthology?
I love learning new ways to use plants that I'm familiar with and learning new things about plants I'm not as used to. I'm always looking for different, innovative ways to incorporate plants into my life and Botanical Anthology is perfect for inspiring new ideas.

Rebecca is a holistic herbalist, Certified Health and Wellness Coach and a proponent of using herbs in food as medicine. She has been a family herbalist for over a decade and is currently studying to become a clinical herbalist.

MODERN DAY ELVES

OWNING AN APOTHECARY DURING HOLIDAY SEASON

BY ELLIOTT BRINKLEY

As the year draws to a close and the days grow darker, our shop at Dancing Willow Herbs transforms into a warm hearth for the community. Nestled in the charming downtown of Durango, Colorado, our apothecary is a gathering place where locals and visitors can find handcrafted herbal products to gift their loved ones. We specialize in herbal tinctures, teas, bath and body products, all made in the lab in the back of our apothecary. Here, surrounded by the medicinal plants, we create an inviting atmosphere that embodies the spirit of the season.

While our business thrives year-round from our local community, the holiday season brings a unique intensity that we embrace wholeheartedly. When we take on new employees, who grow accustomed to the relaxed rhythm of day to day in the apothecary, it is with great emphasis that we try to convey- *the holidays are a completely different beast.*

Our herbalists in the front of the shop juggle customer interactions, online orders, bottling and labeling products. Meanwhile, our dedicated medicine maker often stays late to ensure our shelves remain stocked with all of our products. For me, the season involves managing marketing, planning events, and providing hands-on support wherever needed.

As cold and flu season coincides with holiday festivities, we find ourselves not only facilitating gift shopping but also tending to the health needs of our community. In many ways, we become modern day elves, making medicinal gifts, spreading cheer and keeping everyone healthy!

To sustain our energy and calm our nervous systems during the holiday push, we incorporate nervines and adaptogens into our daily routines. Herbs like milky oats, skullcap, notherwort, reishi, shatavari and ashwagandha make their way into our favorite formulas, festive drinks and even holiday cookies! We curate a soothing atmosphere at the apothecary, favoring smooth jazz over the relentless stream of classic Christmas music. And when we can, we steal moments to wander through the winter magic of nature, grounding ourselves amid the hustle.

One of our favorite events in Durango is “Noel Nite,” held on the first Friday of December. This evening celebrates small local businesses, drawing the community downtown for a vibrant night of shopping and connection. We always look forward to this event, serving up herbal cocktails and mocktails like Medicinal Mushroom White Russians and Extra Medicinal Mulled Wine, alongside a charcuterie board. Noel Nite is not only a crucial financial boost for us; it allows us to engage with our community, give back and have fun while we are doing it!

During the ever increasing commercialization of the holiday season, it is vital to support small businesses. By choosing local, you receive higher-quality products while uplifting individuals and families who work hard to bring their creations into the world. Our small team of 5 celebrates and cherishes our customers as friends. We infuse every aspect of our work with sweetness and care, from making and labeling the products to boxing up your orders to having conversations to educate you on what is the best fit.

As you navigate gifting, we invite you to consider the impact of your choices. Supporting small herbal businesses not only gifts wellness but also fosters a deeper connection to the plants and the people who care for them. We hope this perspective inspires you to seek out and support small herbal businesses during this holiday season.

Elliott is the owner of Dancing Willow Herbs in Durango, CO, where she formulates handcrafted herbal products, works with clients and educates her community. A clinical herbalist with nearly 10 years of professional experience, she empowers individuals with grounded herbal strategies, blending clinical knowledge with the energetic essence of healing and a deep connection to the Earth. Visit her at dancingwillowherbs.com and @dancingwillowherbsco

STAY CONNECTED

Maria Ilves

CONTACT

Tell us what you think!
How did you like our Winter edition?

plantwondercollective@gmail.com

@plantwondercollective

plantwondercollective.com

patreon.com/plantwondercollective.com

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for daily inspiration on our plant of the month

NATURE
JOURNAL PROMPTS
BY LINDSEY MELOTT

As most of the plants are resting underground, their green bodies died back and energy returning to their roots, how are you able to be more rooted and find deep nourishment within your own roots?

Just as the plants are resting for the winter, how can you create more rest within your life?

We need this time to recharge and reflect so that just like the plants, we can blossom and expand in the spring.

What seeds are you wanting to nurture that are waiting to sprout underneath the cold of winter?

And finally, in which areas of your life can you cultivate more inner peace that mirrors the tranquility of nature?

Maria Ilves

BOTANICAL
ANTHOLOGY

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